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Tales of Christian-Muslim Slavery in the Early-Modern Mediterranean

ROBERT C. DAVIS

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HOLY WAR AMD HI IMAM BOHDAGE

Tales of Christian-Muslim Slavery in the Early-Modern Mediterranean

ROBERT C. DAVIS

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Slavery in the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries was not based solely on race or practiced only in the Americas. Faith slaves, both Christian and Muslim, were everywhere in the Mediterranean, held in bondage by the thousands in places as diverse as Algiers, Tunis, Constantinople, Seville, Malta, and Maples.

Holy War and Human Bondage: Tales of Christian-Muslim Slavery in the Early-Modem Mediterranean tells a story unfamiliar to most modern readers—how this pervasive servitude involved, connected, and divided those on both sides of the Mediterranean. The work explores how men and women, Christians and Muslims, Jews and sub-Saharan Africans experienced their capture and bondage, while comparing what they went through with what black Africans endured in the Americas.

Drawing heavily on archival sources not previously available in English, *Holy War and Human Bondage* teems with personal and highly felt stories of Muslims and Christians who personally fell into captivity, slavery or who struggled to free relatives and co-religionists in bondage.

In these pages, readers will discover how much race slavery and faith slavery once resembled one other and how much they overlapped in the Early-Modern mind. Each produced its share of personal suffering and social devastation—yet the whims of history have made the one virtually synonymous with human bondage, while confining the other to almost complete oblivion.

ROBERT C. DAVIS is professor of Italian Renaissance and Early-Modern Mediterranean history at Ohio State University, Columbus, OH. He is the author of six books, including *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters: White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast, and Italy, 1500-1800*. He was an advisor and presenter for the Discovery Channel documentary "The Lost Ship of Venice" (2005) and for the BBC documentary "White Slaves and Pirate Gold" (2003).

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HOLY WAR AND HUMAN BONDAGE

Design from a Redemption Chit of Venice, 1761. Courtesy of the Archivio di Stato of Venice.

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Praeger Series on the Early Modem World
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PREFACE

This book is going to tell a big story. It is about how, for hundreds of years, men throughout the Mediterranean enslaved each other, not because of the color of their skins but because of their religions. This was faith slavery, and it was at its fiercest where Christianity and Islam came in direct contact, along a diffuse, 3,000-mile cultural border running from Iberia and Morocco in the west to the Balkans and the Levant in the east. The holy war, or jihad, that was waged intermittently between the two worlds is well known—it began even before the Crusades of the 11th century and has lasted up to the present. Today's headlines, bloated with tales of wars on terror, piracy on the high seas, and suicide attacks, make this painfully obvious. The faith slavery that once played such a central role in this endless struggle is much less familiar. Though historically such bondage once ebbed and flowed in close connection with the jihads that fostered it, today it is almost forgotten on both sides. Peaking during the Crusades in the Holy Land and the *Riconquista* in Spain, faith slaving died back somewhat in the later Middle Ages. Then it broke out anew in the 16th century, as the Spanish Hapsburgs and the Ottoman Turks simultaneously arrived on the scene. For the next 300 years faith slaving flourished, and for a while it even exceeded race slaving in scale. Not until the early 1800s, with the triumph of Europe's anti-slavery movement and the ensuing age of European colonial dominance, did the two religions strike an uneasy peace and enslavement based on faith finally vanish. Only then did the slavers on both sides move on, looking for other ways to express their piety and earn a living.

It can be debated whether faith slaving was at heart a religious pursuit or more simply a lucrative business operation, a weed that sprouted in the volatile cracks between the Christian and Muslim worlds. The faith slavers claimed that jihad inspired them, but it was the imperatives of profit rather than visions of conversion that drove these men to search ever further afield for new victims. During the first century after Columbus's voyages, Muslim slavers—the famed Barbary corsairs—left their bases in

Algiers and Tunis far behind, to probe for fresh captives in a broad swath from the Cape Verde islands in the south to Iceland and the Faroes in the north. Several thousand miles away, on the eastern flanks of Europe, the Crimean Tartars swept on horseback across the steppes like so many pirates scouring the seas, penetrating deep into the fertile and populous farmlands of Poland and Ukraine, hauling off Christians by the tens of thousands. Stung by the Muslim raids and impressed by the wealth to be earned, European Christians soon reciprocated. Some formed knightly orders, whose oaths bound them to holy crusade, but whose strategy was all about taking slaves and loot. Many others, armed with a single ship and a few men, plundered Islam without benefit of vows, using the cover of jihads proclaimed by others to grow rich through grabbing whatever slaves they could find.

From its rebirth around 1500, faith slaving rapidly developed to a world-spanning scale. It reached west to Newfoundland and the Caribbean, where the Barbary corsairs plucked men from the merchant and fishing ships crossing between Europe and the Americas. It spread east, past the Indian Ocean to the Java Sea, where the Portuguese, Dutch, Turks, and Malays were busy enslaving one other in the name of their various gods. It is enough, however, just to restrict ourselves to the slavers based or prowling in the Mediterranean. With them, we are looking at an economic and social phenomenon that stretched to cover some 7 million square miles of land and sea. Those who fell into their hands, as we shall see, also numbered well into the millions.

Traditionally, such a big story calls for a really, really big book. A historian might tackle the job with an all-out scholarly assault, of the sort mounted by Fernand Braudel in his studies of the Mediterranean and of capitalism. This kind of approach demands years of research in scores of countries, by a scholar (not me) capable of working in multiple languages, some of which no longer exist. Alternatively, one might venture into the thickets of cultural theory and neo-colonial studies, to demonstrate faith slaving's dynamics as a masquerade of contested hegemonies, a power struggle waged in contact zones over agency, the tools of dominance, and just what the term "Oriental" meant.

These are not approaches that I chose, and not only because by now I am too archive weary for the one and too obdurate for the other. To me it has also seemed particularly important to understand what the experience of faith slaving was actually like, before getting too tied up in knots over its causes or meanings. Rather than analyze it, I want to re-introduce this phenomenon that, however significant it once may have been, nowadays seems to have fallen into the collective memory hole not only of the general public, but also of most fellow historians, my colleagues. I want to do so largely by a means that, though simple, is also one of the historian's oldest, trustiest tools—telling stories.

The world of faith slaving proves a remarkably rich source of good stories, most of them just begging for some enterprising bard to take them up, though few seem willing to tackle the job. Yet the practice has a long pedigree. Starting with Miguel Cervantes' own "Captive's Tale" in Don *Quixote,* Barbary captivity narratives rapidly evolved into a booming literary genre, filled with gripping yams that enthralled readers from one end of Europe to the other and kept legions of publishers and translators busy. Yet, like those of fiction, fashions of history change, and most of this generous literature now lies neglected, all but forgotten. For this book it required no great effort to come up with several dozen fascinating slave tales—they were quite literally all over the place. The easiest to find concerned European Christians enslaved by Muslims and mostly came from narratives published between 1600 and 1800. The authors were travelers to Barbary, professional ransomers, missionaries, and sometimes the slaves themselves. The tales I chose, for the most part, were embedded in the longer narratives that recounted the writer's whole encounter with the corsairs, with Barbary, and with the foetid world of the slave *bagnos.* Such stories, once translated and edited, was not so difficult to adapt for this book, though the prose of people who have survived some fairly horrible experiences does tend to devolve into pathos and exaggeration. Many an ex-slave still remembered the sting of the lash and could produce prose that was distinctly purple. Missionaries and redeemers, not surprisingly, reached for their own sermonic prose to recount the experiences they had gone through in Barbary, often casting their encounters with pashas and slave owners in terms of two clashing civilizations, one as godly and well intentioned as the other was plainly demonic.

Diplomatic dispatches are another good source for slave tales. The stories that European consuls and ambassadors sent home have the great advantage of dealing not just with Christian but also Muslim slaves—anyone, that is, who managed to get a petition into the writer's hands. As such, they provide a rare historical glimpse at both sides of faith slaving. Since the ambassadors who passed along these stories were primarily concerned with their diplomatic implications, never intending them for publication or any general readership, they expressed little of the emotion that typified a slave or redemption narrative—none of that high moral tone, sense of personal grievance, or appeals to right and wrong. Almost in compensation, though, ambassadors tended to be pretty cynical and gimlet-eyed in the tales they related to their masters back home, almost as unsympathetic with Christians as they were with Muslims. In the world of high politics where these men moved, anyone foolish or hapless enough to fall into the clutches of the slavers received few condolences and not a lot of help.

In the course of my research I was also lucky to come across a handful of slaving stories buried in the Roman criminal archives. Not really court

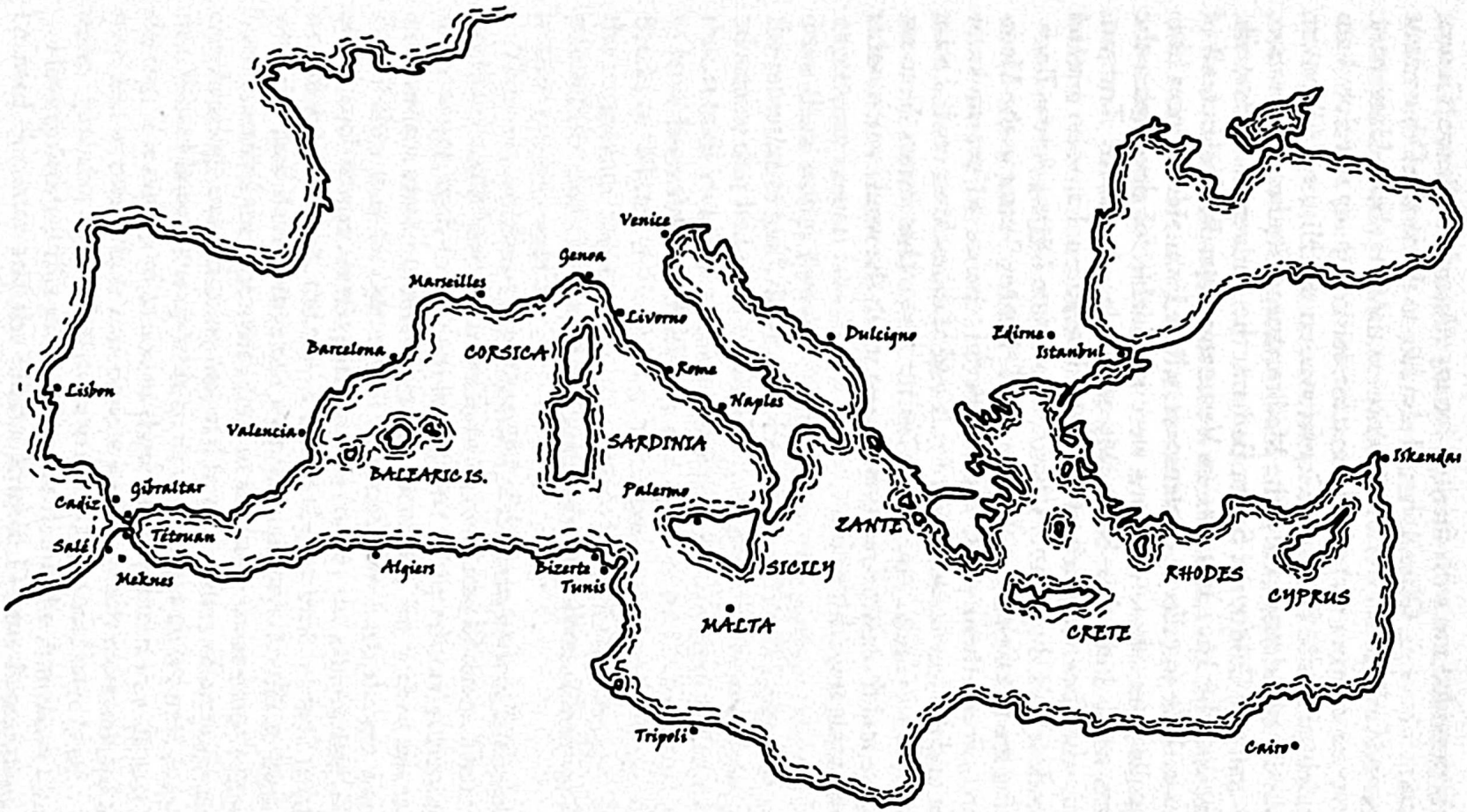
cases, these are essentially group depositions, the testimony of witnesses collected on several occasions when Muslim slave raiders somehow intruded into the jurisdiction of the Roman police. This may sound a bit too much like the Pirates of Penzance having a run-in with the local constabulary, but it did sometimes happen. In these files as many as a dozen witnesses, some protagonists, some utter bystanders, offered their own, often conflicting accounts about what had happened. Some of these stories are vivid and surprising, others merely confusing. Sorting them out to discover the obscure but often rewarding information they contain, and sometimes simply deciphering their cruelly difficult handwriting, was for the most part the heroic accomplishment of Andrea Ottone, my ever-helpful student and assistant.

Most of these little tales have no happy ending. Some have no ending at all—they just stop. Others, when they do finish, end badly. Though a few stories tell of slaves winning their freedom, sometimes against heroic odds, others recount lives that apparently finished in captivity and, presumably, misery and death. Still, it is from the tales themselves, rather than in how they end, that a sense emerges of what it was actually like to experience human bondage in the context of holy war. The details that drive these stories forward—the human relationships implied or stated; the minutiae of food, drink, and clothing recalled; the physical and mental strains that had to be tolerated—add up to a portrayal of faith slavery that is both vividly particular and strangely universal. Slavery turns out to have been slavery whether it was endured by Christians or Muslims, Blacks or Whites, in the *bagnos* of Algiers or the harem of the sultan. In their aggregate, these stories can bring to fresh life the dangers, fears, and possibilities that channeled and controlled the lives of men and women in this very uncertain age.

These are, of course, just a handful of the hundreds of faith slavery stories that I could have collected from archives and libraries. There are limits, however, both to my own energy and to my editors' patience. In any case, even a great number of stories inevitably leave their share of gaps. For all they may be able to tell us about how faith slavery was experienced, such stories are too particular to convey the phenomenon's overall structure and extent, the way it changed over time, or how it compared with the race slaving that was its contemporary. To fill in these gaps, I have practiced the historian's craft in the more usual ways—drawing on, coordinating, and analyzing material from a variety of archives and libraries. What I have come up with, in its way, makes up my own story of faith slaving. It is one more to add to those others written in a distant past, by men and women whose experiences were so much more immediate than mine—probably a great deal more so than they would have liked.

Having finished this work, I want to thank the American Council of Learned Societies and the Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation, which

generously provided me with funding for my research in Rome; Genoa; Venice; and Columbus, Ohio. I should also like to thank the Department of History and College of Arts and Sciences at the Ohio State University, which gave me a term's sabbatical leave for writing up my research. I am greatly indebted to the Berkshire Conference on the History of Women; the University of Palermo, Italy; the Mediterranean Studies Association; the University of California, Santa Barbara; the University of Rostock, Germany; and the 1627 Institute in Vestmannaeyjar Is., Iceland, all of which invited me to talks or conferences, where I was able to meet like-minded colleagues whose opinions were invaluable for developing the ideas that went into this book. My particular thanks to Torbjpm Odegaard, who cheerfully helped me with illustrations. I am also grateful to the producers of the History Channel's program Digging *for the Truth, for* inviting me to take part in the filming of "Pirates: Terror in the Mediterranean." From them came the wonderful chance to get to know Gibraltar and the Moroccan cities of Sale and Meknes. Most of all, I want to thank my wife, Cindy, who for the last three years has always given me a willing ear and thoughtful responses, even when she would much rather have been doing something else.



The Mediterranean and its principal cities, 1600.

CHAPTER 1

FROM THE JOURNAL OF JOHN FOSS, AMERICAN

In the manner familiar from historical novels, we will begin with a tale from the end. Then come the flashbacks. It was in the last years of the Early Modem era, in July 1793, when the American seaman John Foss set out on the brig *Polly,* bound from Newburyport, Massachusetts, to Cadiz, Spain. Not far from their destination (off the same Cape St. Vincent where Admiral Horatio Nelson would distinguish himself four years later), the *Polly* and its crew (who did not distinguish themselves at all) were tricked into surrender by the Algerian brig *Barbazera.* Foss and his shipmates were enslaved by the *re'is,* or corsair captain, named Hudga Mohamet, who also advised them, "Now you are slaves and must be treated as such, and do not think that you will be treated worse than you really deserve." Taken back to port, the men were handed over to their new master, the *dey,* or ruler of Algiers, who made no bones about what lay in store for them. As the *dey* put it, "now I have got you, you Christian dogs, you shall eat stones."

Though Foss did not actually have to eat stones, he was made a slave. Along with the other men of the *Polly,* he received a chain, that universal symbol of bondage—"When we arrived there," Foss recalled, "they put a chain on each mans leg, reaching up to the shoulder and weighing about 25 or 301b." Then the men were sent to the *dey's* slave pen, or *bagno,* where they were stripped of all their clothes and issued a slave's garb. Their year's allotment, Foss recalled:

> consisted of a blanket, a *capoet* (which is a sort of jacket with a head); a waistcoat, made something like a frock, to draw over the

> head, it not being open at the belly; a shirt, with neither collar or wristbands; a pair of trowsers, made something like a woman's petticoat, with this difference—the bottom being sewed up, and two holes to put the legs thro'; and a pair of slippers.[1]

For the next two years Foss was held in bondage and set to hard labor in and around Algiers, until the fledgling United States government finally paid the appropriate number of Spanish rials to free him and those men of the *Polly* who still survived. Once returned home to Newburyport (that took another 6 months), Foss wrote up his adventures and in 1798 he published them, under the title, A *Journal of the Captiv' ity and Suffering of John Foss, Several Years a Prisoner at ALGIERS.*

Foss's memoir is one of the last of the several dozen "White slave" narratives we have—the earliest was by Miguel Cervantes, from the 1580s. Though hardly without his prejudices and biases—he never found much to admire about either the Algerians in particular or Islam generally—Foss does tell his story in a way that seems reliable or at least credible to our modem sensibilities. Perhaps it is his unembellished, Yankee way of laying out a tale, however horrific its details. Perhaps it is the way he encounters events as a secular individual, a New Englander captured by his country's enemy, rather than (as in so many 17th-century accounts) a Christian who fell into the "handes of the devilish Turke," as just reward for his sins. His book is no transparent window, no photograph of a terrible time and place, but Foss does give us what feel like direct glimpses into a slave's life in Algiers in the 1790s. It was not a pretty picture, as Foss assured his readers: "I was an eye witness of these inhuman scenes of diabolical barbarity, which will never be effaced from my memory."[2]

Those who read the *Journal* are soon struck by the two iron realities of Algerian slavery—work and death. These conditioned everything else. Food was allotted only to those who worked and only after they had put in several hours in the morning, at which point their breakfast was handed or, rather, tossed to them—a few spoonfuls of vinegar and a 3-ounce lump of black bread that was "so sour, that a person must be almost starving before he can eat it." Considering what they were fed, it was probably no great loss that the slaves were given almost no time to enjoy it, but quickly hustled back to their work—"They then sit down upon the ground to eat," Foss observed, "and are commonly

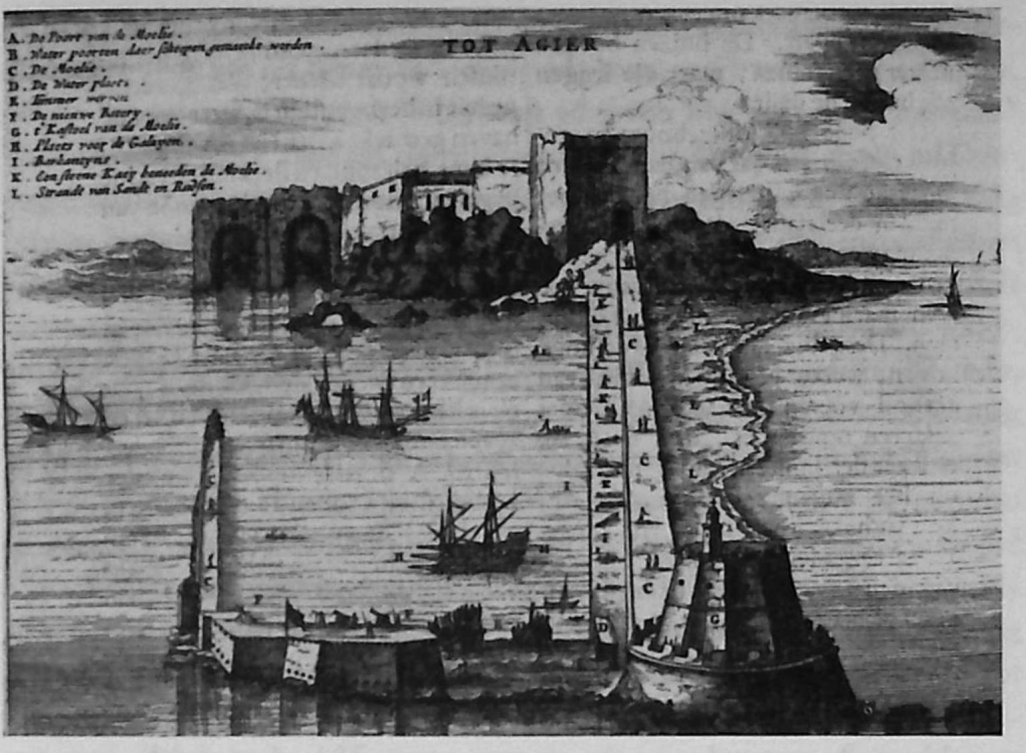


Figure 1.1 The Port and the Mole at Algiers. Olfert Dapper, *Naukeurige Beshrvinge der Afrikaensche Gewesten* (p. 178, Amsterdam, 1676).

called to work in about ten minutes and are seldom allowed more than 12."[3] Such poor rations meant that in their few hours off work slaves had to scramble to scrounge or steal what food they could, lest they starve to death. With night came a sleep that was more torment than rest, on a cold, stone floor, "with neither bed, nor bedding, except the blanket before mentioned," leaving many slaves to dream longingly of their only possible repose—that of death.

But the next day there was always more work, at least for anyone who could still stand up. In a way, Foss was luckier than he knew. By his time the Algerians no longer put their slaves to work as galley oarsmen—arguably the most grueling form of slave labor ever invented. Still, what Foss had to do was hard, filthy, and dangerous enough. He, along with most of the other state-owned slaves in Algiers were mainly put on large-scale construction projects, and during much of Foss's captivity this meant quarrying stones to build the city's breakwater (see Figure 1.1). The work, Foss observed, was as exhausting as it was pointless, since "every gale of wind that comes washes [the boulders] into

deep water, [such that] after a gale they have as much need of them as they had the first hour after the mole was built. So we may conclude this is a work that will never be finished."[4]

The work followed a set routine, week in, and week out. At daybreak, large gangs of slaves were drawn up in the courtyard of the *bagno* and, chained by twos, they were marched out to the quarry, several miles from town. Once they got there, their job was to unearth and blast loose big boulders, drilling holes in the rock to place the gunpowder. What they dislodged, they would roll down from the quarry, making sure to send down only the biggest stones: "Rocks less than 20 Tons weight will not serve" for the mole, Foss noted, and "many are hauled by the slaves, two miles distance, which weigh 40 tons."[5]

The stones were moved in a three-step process. For the first five or six days of each week, the men blasted loose enough stone to form a great heap at the foot of the hill. Then, on Friday (the Muslim day of rest) "all the Christian slaves belonging to the Regency"—not just those already quarrying, in other words—were rounded up to drag the week's work two miles to the nearest quay. This they did by levering each giant stone onto one of several massive "sled[s] made of large square timber," lashing the boulders down, and hauling the whole contraption overland. To move such weights, 600 or 700 slaves pulled on ropes "about seven inches in circumference," and since the road between the mountain and the quay was "all paved with large flat stones ... [the slaves] made some progress in this business." Once arrived at the quay, the boulders were maneuvered onto a pontoon barge, which could be rowed, sailed, or polled to the outer side of the mole, where the stones were heaved into the water. The whole process, with several thousand men working, managed "to haul three, or four rocks in a day, upon each sled."

According to Foss, the slave drivers were obligated by their contract with the *dey* to get a certain number of stones to the mole every week. Each of these "task-masters," as Foss called them, was "anxious to have as many [stones] hauled as possible," and they cared very little about the welfare, or even survival, of the slaves in their charge. Already malnourished and exhausted, the men were also driven relentlessly to make their quota, and as a result some of them were forever getting injured or killed—by mistimed blasts, falling rocks, or other slip-ups. The great sleds were especially dangerous, since anyone hauling on the

ropes could slip and be instantly crushed under the skids. The slave drivers must have found such accidents funny, for according to Foss, they "apparently rejoiced at [them) ... with smiling countenances." Several men were crushed right before Foss's eyes, one of them a Corsican slave, who slipped, such that the skids went over his legs, "taking them both off just above the joint, his legs and feet being crushed in such a manner, that it was impossible to tell one part from another." It took that slave two days of "the most exquisite agony" to die.[6]

To keep the work going and the stones coming out on schedule, the task masters "continually beat ... the slaves with their sticks & goad[ed] them with its end, in which is a small spear, not unlike an ox-goad, among our farmers." No one was allowed to stop, even to take a drink. When slaves collapsed on the job, the drivers would "generally beat them until they are able to rise again." The only escape was for a slave to be "found so sick that he is incapable of doing any kind of work," in which case he might be sent to the hospital run by Catholic missionaries in town. Who got to go to the hospital, however, and how long they got to stay there, was not up to the priests or their doctors, but rather to "a particular taskmaster." This slave-driver's decision was as seemingly arbitrary as it was irrevocable, something Foss witnessed for himself.[7]

Foss wrote of one Scipio Jackson, "a blackman belonging to New York," captured on the brig *Minerva* a month after Foss and the *Polly.* Perhaps in despair at finding himself, a free man at home, reduced to the same sorry state as his Black brethren in the Americas, Jackson began wasting away soon after arriving. After being "for some time very low with the cholic," Jackson managed to get sent to the hospital. A rest was what he needed, but before he could fully recover, the task master "pronounced him able to work, and ordered him to the marine [i.e., the harbor), to perform his daily labour." The hospital staff protested that Jackson was too weak to work, and the African-American made his own feeble objection, but these only drove the slave driver into a rage, such that he "gave him several severe strokes with his stick, saying 'if you are not able, I will make you able!"' Finally, Jackson dragged himself down to the harbor, where he struggled to work for half an hour, but "being exhausted, he fell down upon the ground insensible. Upon this he was again sent to the hospital, where he expired at two o'clock in the afternoon, and was in his grave before sunset."[8]

Perhaps it was this constant closeness of death, so intimately tied to endless work, that once drove Foss to take some of his rare free time and pay a visit to Algiers' Christian cemetery, just outside the city. It was not a pretty sight. Until "about the beginning of the seventeenth century," Foss noted, Christian corpses had simply been "carried out about half a Mile to the eastward of the city, and precipitated down the banks into the sea." A priest who was visiting Algiers in the early 1600s was moved by "this dreadful spectacle" to buy an acre of land about half a mile west of town, supposedly paying the "exorbitant price" of $90,000 for a little plot of wasteland. Having discharged this saintly act, the good father promptly died, of "the plague [that] broke out in his groin ... [making him] the first who was interred on this piece of land, and perhaps the first Christian that had been buried in the territory of Algiers since it was inhabited by Mahomentans."

Despite the priest's worthy intention of providing a Christian burial for European slaves, the cemetery was in a sorry state by Foss's time, both from nearly two centuries of neglect and from its poor location. It was actually not easy to determine if it was a cemetery at all, since "scarcely any marks of a burial ground [are] to be discovered, more than the great quantities of human bones which are to be seen lying on the beach." Few if any of the slaves could afford a coffin, much less a headstone to mark their shallow graves, and these were easily dug up by the wild dogs inhabiting the place. Still worse, the cemetery was situated on low-lying terrain that was essentially an extension of the beach, separated from the open sea by nothing more than a meager dike. Foss noted that, "consequently, in a heavy gale of wind, the violence of the waves washes the dead bodies out of their graves, into the ocean."

What remained were the gnawed bones and rotting flesh of an army of anonymous dead, scattered and strewn around over the course of nearly 200 years. Foss discovered the extent of this hecatomb, by getting a peek at the burial books of the missionary hospital. From the day of the cemetery's founding to his own, he claimed that "according to the records of the nation, upwards of 98,000 Christian slaves have already been buried here." It was a prodigious number of deaths—an average of 500 slaves must have died annually in Algiers, year in, year out, for nearly 200 years. This was, moreover, probably only part of the total. Very likely the figure left out Protestant and Orthodox Christians, who would not have been welcomed in consecrated,

Catholic ground. Nor would it have included, as Foss himself observed, "Those who died in the country, [and who] were suffered to remain above ground."[9] Men given over to the lions and vultures, in other words, leaving no traces behind.

His visit to the Christian cemetery pretty much marked the end of Foss's tale of labor and death. Most of what he had to say in the remaining pages concerned the city, its people, and their customs, as well as his own convoluted tale of ransom and freedom. At the end of his narrative, however, Foss returned to slavery and the weight of its mortality. In a sort of appendix he tacked on to his main narrative, he listed the 13 American ships, schooners, and brigs that had been captured by the Algerians between 1785 and 1793, along with the names of their 130 crewmen. He also marked the names of all those seamen who had "died in Algiers," making it clear just how heavily the "diabolical barbarity" of their enslavement had fallen on this particular group of captives. Of those Americans enslaved in Algiers during these eight years, 36 of them died in captivity—somewhere between a quarter and a third of the total. Such a death rate was appalling even for Foss's violent and disease-ridden times. It was what one might more typically associate with epidemics, with famines or wars—or with Black slavery in the Caribbean.[10]

Work and death. For over 200 years these were the boundaries of existence for most slaves in Algiers. There were, as we shall see, some slaves, luckier or smarter, who found soft work or arranged a speedy ransom, but most captives were not so fortunate. Work—often dangerous, brutally hard, and at the very least humiliating—defined their worlds until all their sufferings were blotted out by death. It was the threat of death that made them work, and many of them were, in the end, worked to death. What held true for Foss in Algiers, late in the Early Modem era, was also the fate of millions of others. They were Christian slaves, not just on the Barbary Coast but also in Egypt, the Balkans, and the Levant. They were also Muslim slaves (and Protestants, and Jews) held in Christian lands, from Iberia to Italy. Their labor was used in both Islam and Christendom—to fight in armies and navies; to move stones, work in mines, dig canals, and haul off forests; to build palaces and erect entire cities. Driven by the lash and the threat of death, they created monuments to their own bondage; though, like the breakwater of Algiers, many of their works would be

destroyed by earthquakes, war, or neglect. The rubble that remained has mostly been paved over and forgotten, or left as neglected heaps of stones that tell a tale as unclear and debatable as the abyss of jumbled bones that so disturbed the sensibilities of John Foss, one afternoon in 1795.

CHAPTER 2

RACE SLAVERY AND FAITH SLAVERY

For most of us, slavery is about Black Africans and the trans-Atlantic slave trade that brought them from the Old World to the New. Though the 20th century has given us a long succession of gulags and lagers, the notion of slave labor, for most modem sensibilities, remains tied to slave ships, Caribbean sugar islands, and the plantations of the American South where this "peculiar institution" once so perniciously flourished. No wonder: it has left a deep mark on our historical consciousness. An estimated 20 million African men, women, and children were captured by the slavers between 1500 and 1880. Of these, barely half ever made it to the Americas, to the short and bitter existence that awaited them; the rest, in confronting the relentless voyage west, died of disease, grief, or terror along the way. Many committed suicide rather than face life on the other side. Our modern imaginations may strain to envision the slave trade's devastating impact on the once rich world of West Africa—the ruined villages, the devastated and depopulated nations that the slavers left behind, as they clear-cut their human prey from the land. We can more readily discern slavery's legacy in North and South America, where the millions of unwilling immigrants made new homes and gave their own cultural and physical presence to the New World. It is no surprise that this holocaust and the term slavery itself have conjoined and are likely to remain connected for centuries to come, as we struggle to work out the economic, political, and psychological implications of the largest involuntary migration in human history.

Trans-Atlantic slavery was, of course, neither the only slavery in history nor the only slavery to touch our awareness. Anyone familiar

with the Bible or the Classics has made intellectual, and perhaps emotional contact with slave societies operating on a vast scale, with their own ways of organizing the elements of bondage. These, however, remain worlds of the distant past. African slavery, by contrast, has left a living legacy that we deal with almost every day. It has intimate ties both with the beginning of the American social order and with the globalization of European power—African slavery was in at the creation of the modem world order. As such, it has come to incarnate the practice and the experience of slavery for us in a way that those ancient forms do not. The more we have studied it, the more it has come to dominate the concept, until it has become almost second nature for us to see slavery in its terms, in racial terms—to see it, quite literally, as a question of Black and White.

At first sight this would seem to explain why both historians and the general public have only recently begun to realize what our ancestors knew all too well—that this bondage imposed by White Europeans on Black Africans was neither the only form of slavery during those years nor always even the most pervasive. This realization has been remarkably slow in dawning. There have been occasional scholarly articles that drew attention to any "other slavery" during these centuries, but for the most part these turn out to have simply meant instances of Black enslavement that were carried out by slavers other than the usual Europeans—usually Muslim Turks and Arabs of the Levant and North Africa, but sometimes other sub-Saharan Africans.

It has only been recently recognized—probably thanks to modern-day clashes between the two faiths—that enslavement also played a key role in the historic, often tortuous relations between Christians and Muslims. This was especially true in the Mediterranean, where the two cultures met and competed for centuries. From the times of the Saracens and the Crusades, but especially in the Early Modem era, between Columbus and Napoleon, followers of the two religions were heavily committed to enslaving one another, and though race, in terms of blackness and whiteness, factored into their notions of who enslaved whom, it was faith, not race that ultimately defined these slaving societies. Yet, Christian-Muslim and African-Atlantic slaving were for the most part contemporaries, and those involved in the one—as slavers or as victims—were often aware of the other. The two might easily overlap, sometimes in the person of a single individual. The doughty

Captain John Smith, among others, claimed to have both run Africans and been enslaved himself, by Turks. Likewise, one of the first novels written in the United States—Royall Tyler's *The Algerine Captive, of* 1797—also sent its protagonist into both race and faith slavery, in a tale that treated the two as equal scourges.

For most of these centuries between 1500 and 1800, however—and certainly up through the mid-17th century—Europeans more typically considered faith slavery as the one that actually mattered. It was captivity by Muslims that threatened ordinary life, depleted public treasuries, and shadowed the public's imagination. The literature of the time, from Cervantes to Molière to Voltaire, and in particular the popular stage, was filled with references to slavery, but the term "slavery" referred to Christians who had fallen under the thrall of "those roguish Turkish pirates," rather than Black Africans sold into bondage by White Europeans.

I have been researching and writing about Mediterranean-based faith slavery for about a decade, and in that time I have gotten a steady stream of letters from the general public, asking, in effect, "Why doesn't anyone talk about this?" "Why haven't I heard of this before?"—or, from the more paranoid, "Why have 'They' been keeping this from us?" As a historian, these are difficult questions for me to answer. They deal with present-day attitudes and responses, rather than past behavior and, as such, are probably best left up to the political scientists and sociologists who think about this sort of thing. Still, over the years a few possible responses have come to mind.

One explanation could be called the ontological one. We have heard very little about this Christian-Muslim slavery quite simply because it never existed, or at least that which did exist was on such a low and local level as to be historically irrelevant. A corollary, more implicit than stated, is that European narratives about the torments of "Barbarian Cruelty" and "Turkish Bondage," though they numbered in the dozens, were, on the one hand, simple literary tropes or fairy tales. On the other, they represented no more than generalized bad-faith attempts to cover up and divert attention from the Europeans' own far more pernicious and widespread forays into slavery and colonial dominance. The doubts and disdain that many modem scholars have expressed in dealing with European enslavement narratives may tell us more about our present-day mind-set than about the actions and experiences of the past. We are, by and large, uncomfortable seeing White Europeans as

anything other than the dominators of this historical era. Our master narrative of the Early Modem, Atlantic world, built on the foundations of colonialism and the enslavement of Blacks by Whites, has little or no place for White Europeans as victims, powerless and at the mercy of those whom scholars now prefer to call "The Subaltern Other."

Our modem discomfort with this apparent role reversal may also be expressing itself in conscious or unconscious attempts to hide Mediterranean slaves, as it were, in plain sight—by labeling them in terms that imply something that was not quite slavery. Some scholars have consistently referred to them as "captives" rather than slaves. It is a seemingly innocuous semantic shift, but one that is freighted with implications: Were they POWs—men taken in combat, legitimate enemies of their captors—but also men who had rights to eventual redemption or exchange under the laws of nations? It is a difficult assumption to maintain, since even a superficial look at available slave narratives makes it obvious how few of these men were either in the military or taken in battle. Instead, the great majority of them—Christian or Muslim, men or women—were simply captured while going about their business. They were "The Enemy" only in the sense of the religion they practiced. That so many of them were obviously not combatants may be why some scholars prefer to say they were "kidnapped" rather than taken captive. This term can give an equally distorted impression of their status, however. It implies that they were taken for ransom or for political reasons rather than for sale into slave labor—bandits and freedom fighters kidnap their victims, not corsairs or slavers.

Such uses of language have a significant resonance. Scholars tend not to apply the terms "kidnapped" or "taken captive" to Black African slaves, sent to the Americas in open-ended enslavement. And for good reason. We associate such "classic" slavery with men and women who have been stripped of their rights, their possessions, their very humanity. With the loss of their personhood went their past homes, their present identity, and all their future, except that of endless toil. When talking of captives or kidnap victims, on the other hand, we merely evoke a kind of semi-slavery, where the bondage is understood to be of short duration and the treatment mild. Having taken their prisoners with the intention of eventually selling them back, masters are presumed to have had the economic sense not to damage their investment. We assume that such captives were kept healthy, and far

from being cut off from their homelands, they would have been positively encouraged to keep in touch with their relatives—those were, after all, the ones expected to pay the ransom.

Many people also have a problem with the whole concept of slavery based on faith, as opposed to race. As accustomed as we have become, over the centuries, to the notion that it was the lighter-skinned who took the darker into bondage, we have also taken it for granted that slavery is and always has been defined in racial terms. Nor surprisingly, we also assume that faith slavery, for not being based on race, is somehow less brutal or dehumanizing. Seen this way, Early Modem Mediterranean slavery, whether there was a little or a lot of it, seems like not such a big deal as its trans-Atlantic contemporary. Even more, we conclude that the religions themselves must have imposed ethical norms on the behavior of slave owners for their treatment of slaves. Apologists for the Muslim enslavement of Christians are especially fond of the latter argument, claiming that Islam, as expressed in *shari'ah,* distinguished between the captivity (asr) of Christians or Jews and the actual slavery *('tibudiyya), of* Black Africans or other peoples not of the Book. Those held in asr, the argument goes, enjoyed a relationship that was socially defined and secure, one that promised eventual closure through ransom and benign treatment in the meantime. They also cite the Qur'an's exhortation that a master should treat his slave with patience and compassion.

These are valid arguments—similar ones were once made on the Christian side (though not any longer)—yet they overlook a reality that, once again, is sitting in plain sight. It was precisely the intense hostility between Christians and Muslims, fueled by economic and imperial competition, that led both sides to enslave each other in the first place. In a highly religious age (when Catholics and Protestants also routinely butchered each other), the tendency to dehumanize and demonize one's faith opponents was almost universal, with emotions and loathing running high on both sides. How much restraint could we reasonably believe was imposed on the brutal expression of these emotions by some vague legal categories or religious exhortations? Especially when neither laws nor beliefs came with any real sanctions, beyond community disapproval, for those who transgressed them?

Such, in brief, are some of the ways that this "other" Early Modem Mediterranean slavery has been turned into something less than the

real thing—less, that is, than Black African slavery in the Americas. Perhaps it would have continued to seem of fairly negligible consequence had not some of its more lurid aspects been recently brought to light in books and television documentaries. These, if not directly inspired by, have certainly been aware of the steadily deteriorating relations between Christianity and Islam in the modem world, a worsening that has given these past hostilities a certain traction with the public. During the last few years, the whole phenomenon of Christian-Muslim faith slavery has been increasingly sensationalized (especially in Europe) as a precursor to the current global jihad between radical Islam and the West. At the same time, it has also been used (especially in the United States) to make the case that slavery was not only a question of Black and White, and that the bondage of White Europeans in the Mediterranean somehow mitigates or diminishes the enslavement of Black Africans in the New World, in effect "making us all slaves of somebody."

Neither response to this story strikes me as especially helpful, if only because both are such transparent attempts to promote existing prejudices, based on very superficial takes on what faith slaving was about and what it meant to those caught up in it. That slavery' existed and indeed flourished in the Early Modem Mediterranean is something that should no longer be doubted. Just what it was like, however, how extensive it was, the effects it had on those it ensnared—all this needs to be much more thoroughly explored before we rush to mine the experiences of the past as a way of explaining (or explaining away) the present.

In the Early Modem era it was not only Islamic jurists who tried to map out the distinctions between slaves and captives. Their European counterparts also recognized a variety of states of servitude among the Muslims, pagan Africans, and even fellow Christians held in bondage in Christendom. Whether those who were actually enslaved appreciated or even noticed such legal niceties is another question. Certainly those in bondage had plenty of names to describe their condition, not just in the scores of languages common among slaves, but also within the same tongue—the Englishman Thomas Saunders, writing in 1585, used no fewer than six terms ("bondmen," "prisoners," "captives," "slaves," "slaves perpetuall," and "bondslaves") in just a single paragraph. Still, in practical terms all these words seem to have amounted to pretty much the same thing, and both Christians and Muslims recognized

slavery' when they had to live it. The dragoman Giovanni Battista Salvago summed up the experience as well as anyone, in the report he sent to the Venetian Senate in 1624:

> When one is made a slave, he is despoiled and stripped naked ... At sea, on land, everywhere they are miserable Slaves, deprived of sweet liberty, far from their homeland, relatives, friends and Christian customs, under the command of someone who for nothing can beat them and with [those] beatings make them die wretchedly.[1]

In Mediterranean slavery', as in the Americas, human beings were commodities. Regardless of any theoretical status they may have enjoyed as *osr* instead of *'ubudiyya,* men and women in this bondage were typically considered possessions and treated as such. Their masters, along with the right to buy and sell them, also had the power of life and death over them. Though exhortations to treat slaves kindly could be found in both the Bible and the Qur'an, such moral strictures were rarely turned into enforceable laws. Both in Christendom and in Islam there was nothing illegal about a master's brutalizing his slave: He "could resell him, overload him with work, imprison him, beat him, mutilate him, kill him, without anyone interfering." Beyond the possibility of some mild public disapproval, there was no more restraint on a vicious master in Barbary than there was in Barbados. As William Okeley, an English slave in Algiers in the 1640s, observed, "If a Patron shall *kill his Slave, for* ought I could perceive, he suffers no more for it, than if he should *kill his Horse."*[2] Custom, circumstance, or economic good sense may have persuaded many a master in Barbary to treat his slave with kindness, or even make him or her a part of the family, but the force of ownership was always implicit in the relationship. So Okeley himself discovered, when his master, who was also part owner in a corsair galley, told him that:

> I must go [to sea] in her. It was a nipping word: I pleaded, that I was no Sea-man, understood nothing of the Mariners Art, and therefore ... he could expect little Service from me in that kind ... But my Patron had a solution worth all these: He told me peremptorily, *I must, and should go; 1* found myself under force, 1 was a *Presst Man:* who could not examine the Justice of the Cause. In a word,

> his Commands were back'd with *Compulsion,* and whatever his *Authority* was, he had more power than I had Courage to deny, or strength to resist; and go I did?

It was not just being forced to do unpleasant or unsuitable work that made men like Okeley feel their servitude. They were just as helpless when it came to being sold, traded, or given away as presents. They could also be rented out. Okeley complained how, when his first master was pressed for cash, "it fell to my Lot ... to be Mortgaged for a certain sum of Money, jointly to two Persons." Muslim slaves had much the same experience. French and Spanish galley captains were always looking for new oarsmen, and "Turks" were reputed to be among the best. The unquenchable need in the Christian fleets for new rowers gave rise to a brisk trade in Muslims of all backgrounds, both in the slave markets of Malta and Livorno and directly between galleys.

Whether Christian or Muslim, for these oarsmen, or *galeotti,* as the Italians called them, a trip to the galleys could easily turn into a life sentence. Though the Christians at least might hope to some day be ransomed, their masters were under no real compulsion to sell them. Nor was there much compassion to be found in a ship at war: Very few galley commanders gave much thought to the cajoling of the Bible or Qur'an when faced with the need to discipline their oarsmen. Sometimes the Muslim and Christian powers agreed to cease-fires that promised, among other matters, the return, exchange, or buy-back of each other's slaves, but even after the papers were signed, the *galeotti* could find themselves still chained to their benches. Galley captains who were unimpressed by their own holy books were not easily swayed by mere treaties, and they could always find ways to hide their faith slaves among the shuffling convicts and "free" rowers who made up the rest of their oarsmen.

For the Mediterranean *galeotti,* slavery could be as permanent as it was for any African sent to cut cane in the Caribbean. Like those Africans, many of these oarsmen found their life sentence to be a short one, since the intensity of their work and the harshness of the conditions killed them very quickly. Some adapted and survived, of course, but like those who managed to stay alive in the Nazi lagers or Stalinist gulag, one wonders if they were better off for it, since all they

had to look forward to was pulling an oar for 20 or 30 unremitting years. Stories abound of Turkish rowers who passed decades in the Spanish or Maltese galleys, and of Christians who did half a century or more in the Turkish Imperial Fleet. In 1765, for instance, the Venetians discovered 10 of their subjects who had been *galeotti* "in the Galleys of the Grand Turk" for between 22 and 55 years. According to the documents, they ranged in age from 60 to 88 years old.[4]

There is no indication in the archives that any of these Venetians were ever set free, and this was the lot of most *galeotti.* Once their masters (often the state itself) judged them too old to row any longer, two possibilities existed. If they were Catholics, someone might finagle their ransom through one of the redemptive charities. Should that happen, they could get taken home, to live out their ruined lives among old neighbors who had probably long forgotten them. Those who couldn't manage a ransom, on the other hand, were simply dumped ashore in their galley's home port, left to beg for the rest of their days.

A life sentence of slavery was not just the fate of the *galeotti.* In the boom towns of Barbary', where certain classes of skilled artisans were always in short supply, those versed in a craft might find that, once taken into slavery', it was very hard to ever regain their freedom. Tailors, weavers, goldsmiths, shipwrights, scribes, musicians, and the like always fetched high prices in the slave markets or Algiers or Tunis. They were bought by bidders who "were not inclined to sell them back [to Christendom] at any price," but instead planned to work them, setting them up in their profitable trade and living off the proceeds, much like the bourgeois in Europe who invested in government bonds.

In the Venetian archives we find an especially good example of a man made to suffer for his skills in the tale of one Giacomo Colombin. Colombin was a master shipwright, captured at sea by the Algerians in 1602. Somehow his captors found out about his abilities, such that, once sold in the market in Algiers, his new owner was said to "value him out of this world." When some Venetian agents floated tentative inquiries about ransoming Colombin back, they discovered just how much he was valued, for his owner set his price at an extraordinary 1,000 *zecchini*—the sort of price that a Venetian noble might expect to pay and some 10 to 20 times the going rate for an ordinary craftsman. Since no one was able to come up with such riches, Colombin remained in captivity for over three decades, even as he grew famous

in Algiers. Wealthy corsairs competed for his services, offering him "silk clothes, scarlet cloths, and money" if he would build them a ship or teach their own slaves some of his skills. Although unhappy (he later claimed) about helping those who were enemies of Venice and Christendom, Colombin did train 10 master shipwrights for the Algerians. He also refurbished a number of captured ships into war galleys and directed the construction of a long line of new vessels, for which he was well rewarded. It was said that "for each [completed] galley he might receive as a gift 800 or more [Venetian] ducats [about 200 ^ecc/iini], beyond which he was given license to trade in all sorts of goods ... from which one can judge that he was a rich man."

Perhaps Colombin enjoyed the house he was given, high up in the best part of the city, but much of his wealth he spent buying fellow Venetians out of slavery and sending them home. For 30 years, he never stopped dreaming of his freedom, even as he realized that he "could never be ransomed, because it would bring too much damage to the Turks to lose a man of such established value." Four times he tried to escape but failed, and for punishment he was beaten, chained up, and thrown in prison. Each time, though, the Algerians had to take off his chains and let him go back to his work and his wealth, since "they have no other master like him." Finally, in 1632, Colombin got away, in a ship that he himself had built, together with 22 other slaves who had helped in its construction.[5]

There were other slaves like Colombin. The Frenchman P. P. Thedenat, for example, was a 17th-century polymath captured at sea and sold in the market of Algiers as a scribe. As his skills became apparent over the course of 40 years in bondage, he rose in stature until he ended up as a minister of court. Such men, though often powerful and at least occasionally happy, passed their years locked away in something of a gilded cage, beyond the hope of any ransom. Some were treated like members of the family, coddled by their masters, loaded with authority and responsibilities, and cherished as trusted companions. They were blessed among Christian slaves, but they were also fairly rare. They were even less common among Muslim slaves, though they existed. One such was Hasan ibn Muhammed al-Wazzan al-Fazi, better known as Leo Africanus. Captured by Christian corsairs around 1520, Hasan converted to Christianity and took the name of his patron, Pope Leo X, who then set him up as an essayist and Rome's teacher of

Arabic. Now a free man, Hasan/Leo seems to have had scant liking for Christendom, and, as soon as he reasonably could, he made his way from Italy back to Tunis, where he ended his life again as a Muslim.

Although these success stories were rare, some modem scholars have used them to argue that Mediterranean slavery was basically benign, and that in their bondage men like Colombin and Thedenat gained wealth and prestige that would probably have never been theirs in freedom. It is, of course, easy to dismiss such exceptional cases as just that—exceptional and atypical of Mediterranean slaves generally. Seen another way, though, the argument seems more pernicious than simply overblown. It veers uncomfortably close to claims about Black slavery that were last made seriously some 50 years ago—how house servants in the Old South, who enjoyed comparatively soft lives and high status, could be offered as evidence that slavery in the Americas was actually a blessing for Africans. The argument—that the benevolent paternalism of Souther plantation owners gave Black slaves a better life than they could have otherwise expected, either back in Africa or as factory laborers in the North—was first advanced (not surprisingly) by the masters themselves. It hung on for years after the Civil War, however, even in supposedly serious studies. Not until a concerted campaign was mounted against it was this line thoroughly debunked. In the 1950s and 1960s, a new generation of scholars went to the archives and, in the masses of primary sources, found convincing proof that the creature comforts and comparative rise in status enjoyed by a select few did little to set right the widespread individual and social destruction caused by the denial of personhood and legal rights.

Given how completely the paternalist argument has been discredited in the New World, it is sad to find it creeping back in the context of Mediterranean faith slavery. Nor have its claims been based on the privileges of the cosseted few. In a variation on the theme—much loved by the old Southern planters—that Black slavery of any sort, however harsh, was still better than pagan life in the jungle, it has been suggested that this, after all, "was not a humane age." The lives of manual laborers, free or slave, were hard all over, even as the rewards were few. In other words, "the circumstances of 'hard laborers' in Algiers were not peculiar to that society, but rather were characteristic of the age," and not so different from that experienced by convicts, pressed seamen, and unskilled workers generally around the Mediterranean.

This was an argument also advanced at the time, though mostly by those without much personal knowledge of what this slavery was really like. Those who actually went to Barbary and saw the Christian slaves there soon came to a different conclusion. Father Philemon de La Motte, a French priest who sailed to Algiers in 1719 to ransom slaves, certainly did not count himself among those redemptive priests who took it as "Part of their Function to make a dismal Story of Slavery among the *Infi^ dels."* He recognized that some slaves might actually profit in their bondage, and at one point he claimed that, "As for the Slaves at *Algiers,* they are not indeed so unhappy." Nevertheless, de La Motte also realized that the loss of one's freedom was too high a price for the basically fleeting rewards of comfort or status, since "still they are Slaves; always hated on account of their Religion; incessantly over-burdened with labor; and everlastingly in Danger of renouncing their faith ... thro' Despair."[6]

Faith slaves in the Mediterranean shared many of the conditions of their servitude with race slaves in the Americas, their contemporaries in bondage. That they could be freely and repeatedly bought and sold established their status as commodities, a condition that effectively negated what Orlando Patterson has called their innate "personhood." Like African slaves, a high percentage of Mediterranean slaves turn out to have had little serious hope of ransom, especially in the years before 1700. Mediterranean slaves were also, on both the Christian and Muslim side, treated as criminals were treated—shackled, branded, and freely whipped. Yet, as we have seen, few of them had been criminals or enemy combatants. For the most part their only crime was their faith—just as the Africans' only crime was their race—combined with the compelling economic forces that made their labor so profitable and their lives so cheap.

If we grant that Mediterranean bondage actually was slavery, we still have the question: Was it anywhere as significant as New World slavery? Over the years, those few historians who have noticed the phenomenon at all have tended to treat it as an interesting, though minor, spinoff of corsair piracy, involving at most a few thousand victims. In terms of scope, they have assumed, it was nothing compared to the millions of Africans who were shipped across the Atlantic to the New World. It just takes a brief glance at the archival records, however, to see that faith slavery in the Mediterranean was genuinely vast in terms of those it touched.

It is true that, though slaving was indigenous to the Mediterranean long before the Crusades, it remained sporadic and scattered in the politically and religiously fragmented world of the late Middle Ages. When we hear of slaves in Renaissance Italian cities like Venice or Florence, they were the personal attendants of the rich, few in number and brought in—often by Muslim middlemen—from far beyond the Mediterranean basin. Many of them were Blacks from sub-Saharan Africa or Circassians from the eastern Black Sea. The first stories of really large-scale slave raids, of Muslims and Christians mutually capturing and selling each other by the thousands, only begin with the establishment of the Spanish/Hapsburg and Ottoman empires. These giant regimes, each dominating its half of the Mediterranean either directly or through client states, grappled for two centuries in an ongoing struggle as religious as it was geopolitical. In this relentless jihad, slaving played an essential role, both tactically and politically, as each side sought to wound, humiliate, and wear down the other.

In the fight to control the Mediterranean, ancillary forces played a key role. The Ottoman Imperial fleet was regularly backed up and sometimes captained by Muslim corsairs based in Algiers and Tunis, on the Barbary Coast. The Algerians were led by the likes of the brothers OruQ and Kheir-ed-din Barbarossa (see Figure 2.1) and by Dragut Re'is, men who rose to become admirals of the Turkish fleet, but who also remained corsairs in their own right. While pursuing Ottoman imperial policy, they were always open to a little freebooting on the side, and they and their many successors grew hugely rich on the booty and slaves they managed to wrest from Christian shipping and its undefended shores. Their efforts were matched on the Christian side by two crusading orders—the Knights of St. John (established in Malta in 1530) and Knights of St. Stephen (in Livorno and Pisa in 1562). Working with their overlords and independently, all these "state corsairs," Muslim or Christian, regularly harvested the human wealth of the western Mediterranean, taking prizes and persons from Algiers to Morocco, from Granada to Valencia, Liguria, Naples, Calabria, and Sicily.

Though Christians led their share of attacks, the Muslim corsairs were the ones especially adept at pulling off large-scale slave raids. During much of the 16th century, the Turkish/Algerian fleets were able to set entire armies of 5,000 or even 10,000 men ashore in

Figure 2.1 The Brothers Barbarossa. Pierre Dan, *Historie van Barbaryen en des zelfs Zee-Roovers* (Amsterdam, 1684).

Christian territory. Fanning out into the often poorly protected countryside, they burned villages, sacked churches and monasteries, and kept on taking prisoners until "they had filled their galleys with slaves almost to the point of foundering." In those days, with so many European captives pouring into the slave markets of Algiers and Tunis, the raiders used to say that it was "raining Christians in Algiers" and that you could "swap a Christian for an onion."[7] Small wonder such tall tales were making the rounds, considering the hauls brought back from some of the raids. In 1544 the Algerians sailed into the Bay of Naples and carried off 7,000 men, women, and children; in 1554, men known only as "the Turks" emptied Vieste, in Italian Calabria, of its 6,000 residents; in a single raid on Granada in 1566, the combined forces of Algerians and Moroccans made away with upwards of 4,000 Spaniards.

The raids continued until the later 1500s, often as part of larger military maneuvers, sometimes just for the sake of getting more slaves. Eventually, however, Ottoman imperial ambitions, blunted by the failure to capture Malta (1565) and a great naval defeat at Lepanto

(1571), left the Mediterranean to concentrate on a largely futile series of wars with Persia. The Spanish, too, found their attentions diverted after 156S, into the seemingly more pressing business of the Dutch Revolt and some difficulties with England. As a result, both the great fleets, Ottoman and Hapsburg, had retreated to their opposite ends of the Mediterranean by the end of the 1570s. Yet neither corsairing nor slaving ended. Instead, a host of client states—not just Algiers, Malta, and Livorno, but also Saĺe, Tangiers, Majorca, Civitavecchia, Naples, and Tunis—continued on their own. They were joined by other free-booters, many of them downright pirates, from England, Flanders, and Holland.

By 1600, a new generation of corsair captains, known as *re'is* in Barbar}', had largely taken over from the Ottomans, and though for the most part they only commanded small oared vessels like the galeot and felucca, they were also nimble, determined, and eager for gain. They made their living attacking any Christian vessel or shore not specifically protected by treaty and papers of *laissez passer,* and sometimes even then. If they were small operators, so were most of their prey, and, as a contemporary noted, "[they] doe much offend the Christians, in taking their ships, Tartanes, and Satties, and other small vessels, making all the Christians that they take slaves." Over the course of the next century, in thousands of minor raids on land and by sea, they probably took more slaves and caused more destruction than all the grand fleet actions that had preceded them. As the great French historian, Fernand Braudel, summed up their place in the Mediterranean hierarchy:

> Besides the great predators, lesser scavengers prowled the seas ... These were humble men with humble ambitions: to capture a fisherman perhaps or rob a granary, kidnap a few harvesters ... Such minor carnivores did not always inflict the least damage, nor amass the smallest fortunes in the end.[8]

Thomas Baker, the English consul in Tripoli in the 1680s, called the work of these second-tier slavers "Christian stealing," the minor yet steady predation of men, women, and children from the shores and ships of Christendom. Similar cut-rate corsairs on the Christian side worked to take all the Turks, Arabs, and Moors that came to hand. They were perhaps not quite as successful as their Muslim

counterparts, but that says less for any want of trying than the shorter lines of communication in much of the Islamic Mediterranean as well as the greater possibilities for moving goods and people by land within the Ottoman Empire.

In the end, as Braudel noted, it all added up. Most important for the story of Mediterranean slavery, it did so in ways that have largely passed under the historical radar, without epochal battles or wars between empires. The slaves continued to flow into the markets, in Algiers, Constantinople, Malta, and Livorno, but from many different sources and at rates that only occasionally set off alarms in royal courts and chancelleries.

According to Braudel, the time of corsair plundering and slaving reached its peak between 1580 and 1620, as the Turks were replaced first by the Algerians and then by the Tunisians, Tripolitans, and Salé rovers. Though Richelieu dismissed them as "rabble," the *re'is of* Algiers were soon running their own corsair republic, at first under the nominal supervision of the sultan's appointed pasha, but then increasingly directed by their own elected military leader, known as the *dey.* By the 1620s, it was the turn of Salé, where a pirate republic was founded by Moorish exiles from Spain on Morocco's Atlantic coast. For the rest of the century, the entire Maghreb was a hotbed of pirates and slavers, matched in aggression and tenacity only by the Christian corsair forces of Malta and Livorno.

We can also say that faith slaving in the Mediterranean and race slaving out of Africa were related in a stronger sense than simply through the structures of bondage they so obviously shared. Both were ancient practices that had continued throughout the Middle Ages, though primarily as constrained and localized social curiosities. Then, around the end of the 15th century, each took off, growing rapidly in scope to become world-spanning phenomena. What got them started was, in a very real sense, the same primordial event—the completion of the Spanish *Reconquista,* marked by the invasion and conquest of Granada in 1492. With their successful conclusion of this, the last of the Medieval Crusades, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella closed the book on the long and epic Christianization of Iberia, only to set in train a new series of events that would reverberate down the centuries. From newly conquered Al-Andalus, there streamed the refugees they had created—thousands of Moors, who moved across the Straits to

reestablish themselves in Morocco and the Barbary Coast. They were the first of many waves of often bitter and disaffected refugees, waves that culminated in the final Moorish expulsions of 1607-1609. Displaced from an Iberia where their ancestors had lived for more than seven centuries, many of these new arrivals were ripe for calls of revenge and jihad. With the intimate knowledge that many of them had of the Spanish coasts and countryside, they were ideally situated to make that jihad a very satisfying reality, by systematically plundering the lands and enslaving the subjects and allies of the Catholic Monarchs. Within a generation, their increasingly sophisticated corsairing, together with the Spanish reprisals it inevitably provoked, turned this entire end of the Mediterranean into a slaver's and freebooter's paradise.

Yet this was only half the fruit that came from that single conquest in 1492. Even as the Moors were packing up to leave their ancient homeland, the Genoese Christopher Columbus was setting sail from Palos de la Frontera, just on the other side of Andalusia. Sponsored by the Spanish crown, as part of a program of carrying the Christian *Reconquista* beyond the confines of Iberia, Columbus, as everyone knows, opened vast new lands for Spanish settlement. The need to work these lands—often hard, brutal work in climates that could prove lethal to Europeans—drove first the Spanish and then the Portuguese, British, and Dutch to exploit a new source for labor. They began to traffic in Black African slaves, turning men and women who had long been treated as a minor object of commerce into a major economic and demographic force. Within a century—somewhat more slowly than with Mediterranean faith slaving—the trade in Africans took off, as slavery and the opening of the New World became indissolubly linked.

In many ways, then, race and faith slavery were born as historical twins, and not surprisingly they long remained linked in the minds of Europeans. Both sorts of bondage were especially conjoined in Spain, and in ports like Seville and Cadiz both Black and Muslim slaves crowded the streets. Moreover, even as western Europeans learned to become slavers, they also found out what it meant to be slaves. The Iberians, English, Dutch, and French all ran Black slaves from the Guinea Coast even as they themselves regularly ended up in Muslim hands, as chattel in the slave pens of Algiers or Salé. Critics of slavery, like the Puritan Morgan Godwyn and the Orientalist Joseph

Morgan used the one form of captivity to criticize the other, and many observers—some of them slaves—saw that it was impossible to condemn one without attacking the other. The novelist Royall Tyler built *The Algerine Captive* on the ironic insights gained by his fictional hero, the American Dr. Updike Underhill, who, when bringing slaves back from Benin, was himself seized by corsairs and enslaved in Algiers.

Faith slaving began to decline in the later 17th century, even as race slaving, after a slower start, surpassed it in terms of volume, eventually moving to an altogether new level of quantity and efficiency. The changing economics and power politics of the Mediterranean hedged in the corsairs and slavers, eventually putting the Knights of Malta and St. Stephan out of business. The Barbary corsairs kept up their ability to harm Christians, though on a steadily more modest scale. As a result, the figure of "the Turk" that represented them morphed for Europeans from an object of fear in the 1500s, to one of curiosity in 1600s, to become in the 1700s first a metaphor and finally a joke. In the 1790s it was certainly still possible to fall into bondage and hard labor, as John Foss discovered, even as the likes of Mozart and Rossini were setting the hardships of European slaves to catchy tunes and turning their pasha owners into comic basses. In those very same years, however, the struggle for abolition of the African slave trade was heating to a pious crescendo of its own, one that inspired notably few opera composers. The two forms of bondage that had once seemed so entwined had become distinct.

After its historically brief resurgence in the Napoleonic years, slaving on the Barbary coast was essentially wiped out in 1830, with the French conquest of Algiers. Then began the long process of forgetting that brings us up to the present day. For many, in North Africa and in Europe, a century of colonial rule seemed to balance the books with what had gone before, settling the moral debts run up by 300 years of corsairs, slave galleys, chain gangs, and harems. Finally, it was as if all this had never existed, or only had done so in the imaginings of Mozart, Ingres, Hugo, and Gerome.

These days, for many Europeans (but no doubt for many Turks and Moors as well) just the language and proverbs bom of the ancient traumas remain, after "even the idea has been lost of these dogs that had brought so much terror." In France, they still say that someone is *cruel comme un turc or e'est un vrai turc*—a "true Turk" or "pitiless." On

religious holidays, in the villages of Valencia and Calabria, the turbaned Turk still turns up, playing a role halfway between the boogyman and the clown—as indeed he does in Holland on Sint-Nicolaas Day. In Sicily, by contrast, they have a more telling expression. People still say they have been *pigliato dai ttirchi,* "taken by the Turks," to signify taken by surprise—but that island was on the front lines of the slaving wars for centuries, and the experiences are burned deep in the collective spirit. As recently as the early 1900s, folklorists who went collecting tales from Sicilian peasants could still find without too much trouble flashes of collective memory that were stronger and more immediate than mere proverbs or sayings. One Sicilian woman recalled what it had been like with particular clarity, when asked about such things:

> The oldest [she said] tell of a time in which the Turks arrived in Sicily every day. They came down in the thousands from their galleys and you can imagine what happened! They seized unmarried girls and children, grabbed things and money and in an instant they were [hack] aboard their galleys, set sail and disappeared ... The next day it was the same thing, and there was always the bitter song, as you could not hear other that the lamentations and invocations of the mothers and the tears that ran like rivers through all the houses.[9]

CHAPTER 3

RUE, BRiTAwriiA

It was in 1740 that the tune, “Rule, Britannia" first left the London music halls to become Britain’s quasi national anthem, and ever since it has been common knowledge that “Britons never, never will be slaves.” When it was originally written, however, the hymn’s promise was made in the face of some rather uncomfortable recent history. Most of this has by now been long forgotten, but the British in the 18th century had only just emerged from a period in which they had indeed been slaves, and somewhat more often and in larger numbers than memory and music might care to admit.

For the most of the 16th century, England had stayed on the side-lines in the war between Christianity and Islam, as Ottoman Turkey and Hapsburg Spain battled each other to exhaustion. Occasionally, on the assumption that Catholics were a more serious threat than Muslims, Elizabeth I took up arms against the Spanish. This helped assure friendly relations between her government and the Sublime Porte, but there was little contact between the two societies in any case, since the English carried on almost no trade with the Turks and their dependencies. As a result, the Elizabethans had scant experience with the Barbary corsairs or with the enslavement that often befell those who got too close to them. Britain, perched out on the western edge of Europe, was fast emerging as a world power, but the English still remained innocents in the ways of the Mediterranean.

This all changed after 1580, however. The chartering of the Levant, or Turkey Company, in 1581 opened the way for English penetration of the Mediterranean waters. Commercial connections were made with the major Ottoman ports, consulates were set up, monopoly trading

rights established, and soon the Company was sending its heavily armed convoys from Tangiers to Constantinople. Along with the Company's ships also slipped through the Straits a steadily increasing crowd of British privateers and pirates. The former came to loot Spanish shipping in the western Mediterranean. The latter (who could easily be the former as well) were after just about anyone they could catch—Spanish allies like the Neapolitans or Genoese, but also avowed neutrals like the Venetians. Most of them, Company, pirates, and privateers alike, came in the full-rigged, tall ships that gave them mastery in the winds of the Atlantic and the edge in firepower in the Mediterranean, where quirkier winds had traditionally favored galleys.

At first the English "sea dogs" were welcomed in Algiers and Tunis. Some even converted to Islam and joined the ranks of renegade corsairs. Others were helpful and open about explaining the mysteries of the full-rigged ships—it was partly thanks to such vessels that the Algerians were able to break through the Straits and carry their raiding into the open Atlantic. After Elizabeth's successor James I made peace with Spain in 1604, however, Britain and the Algerians no longer shared the same enemy. Friends no more, they began openly preying on each other's shipping. For Algiers, which had almost no economic base besides corsairing, it was essential to find new adversaries and start new wars to keep the prizes and fresh slaves flowing into the city's markets. The British, taking over an ever-larger share of the Mediterranean carrying trade from the Spanish and Italians, were too tempting a target to pass up.

Soon, the corsairs were taking an astonishing number of British vessels—just between 1609 and 1616, according to the Admiralty, the realm lost 466 merchant vessels, nearly seven a month, on average. Able to cruise the Atlantic waters, the Algerian *re'is soon* learned to spread across the few established trade routes between Britain and its nascent colonies, controlling "the ocean from the Islands of Cape de Verd near the Coast of Guinny Euen as farr as Norway [threatening] our Ships [bound] for Portugall, Spayn, Madera, Canaryes & Westward Islands, New England, Virginia &. all the East &. West Indies." They captured merchant and passenger ships but were just as happy to take fishing barks and smacks, of which they might seize 10 or more at a time on the way back from the Grand Banks. They were less interested in the loads of salted cod than the men on board. It was said that the "Newfoundland

fleet [had] about two hundred and fiftye saile of shippe ... [with] some foure or flue thousand men belonging to the westeme parte." Such prime fishermen fetched good money at the slave market back in Algiers. Few of the *re' is* were overly troubled about the legality of their seizures, since "looting the vessel, enslaving the crew, and sending the ship to the bottom of the sea destroyed most of the evidence."[1]

Between 1601 and 1609, records indicate that over 450 Englishmen were enslaved by the Algerians, but this was just the beginning. In the decade that followed that number certainly tripled, considering the hundreds of British ships the corsairs reportedly seized, with each vessel carrying 10 to 20 men. By 1620, there were said to be over 2,000 "poore mariners" enslaved in Algiers alone, with sundry others held in elsewhere in Barbary. The government of James I was greatly worried about the economic effects the corsairs were having on British commerce. Such steady depredations by these "Turkish pirates," warned privy councillor George Carew in 1618, "do great harm to our ships in the Mediterranean; if they are not destroyed, the Levant trade will be at an end." By 1620, the threat had become serious enough that a naval expedition was sent to Algiers to punish those "desperate rogues and renegades ... who have renounced God and virtue."[2] After showing the flag along the Barbary Coast and unsuccessfully trying to destroy the corsair ships with fireboats in Algiers harbor, the British commander gave up and sailed home. His one small success was in arranging the ransom of a few dozen elderly and worn-out English slaves out of the thousands in captivity.

James and his advisors' first concern about the corsairs seems to have been their potential impact on British trade. There was less sensitivity in the government about how the mass enslavement of British subjects might affect public morale. For several decades the Crown made no real effort to collect funds to ransom "the poore captiues;" and when, after the 1620 expedition, such collections were authorized, the contributions often ended up spent on other projects. Over the next few years, things got worse. Although the English ambassador to Constantinople worked out a treaty with the Algerians in 1622, the slave-taking continued—in part because English pirates were also active in the Mediterranean, but also because the British fleet was fairly toothless when it came to defending the realm's commercial shipping. Even worse, however, was that after 1620 a new player got involved in the slaving business.

These were the Salé rovers, a particularly tenacious band of corsairs based in Morocco's Atlantic port of Salé. Mostly refugees of Spain's final Moorish expulsion in 1607-1609, the Sallymen, as the English came to call them, were very much at home on the open ocean. Completely independent from the Ottoman sultan—or any other overlord—the Salé rovers could largely ignore the treaties or other diplomatic niceties that (sometimes) constrained other corsairs. In the first half-century after their arrival, they attacked pretty much any ships they liked. They preferred the Spanish, by dint of natural antipathy, but the European and African coasts were also crowded with British brigs, barks, and pinks that made for easy targets.

Before long, the British public, often and easily aroused by disputes with foreigners, was becoming restive over the slavery issue. In 1622, John Rawlins published his account of *The Famous and Wonderfull recoverie of a Ship of Bristoll, called the Exchange, from the Turkish pirates of Argier,* which both told an exciting tale of escape from slaver)' and excoriated those responsible for England's neglect of its sailors. Other such tales of British derring-do and heathen duplicity—more broadsheets than books—soon followed. Just as popular with the public were the petitions presented on behalf of the captives to Parliament, the Privy Council, and even the King, then published for public edification. These appeals, already commonplace in the 1610s, were both requests for aid and implicit critiques of the government's seeming inability to respond on the slaves' behalf. In 1623, for the first time in English—and perhaps European—history, one of these petitions was presented to the Crown by women. Although they assured James of their diffidence as females in using such a public forum, the women were still fairly insistent that something concrete be done about getting their "husbands and sonnes and servantes" out of their "wofull, miserable and lamentable captivitie and slavery" in Algiers and Sale?

Perhaps because they were the first women in the realm to submit such a politically charged petition, they were pointedly ignored. Yet for the rest of James's reign, and throughout that of his son Charles, the appeals continued. In 1635, the women targeted the Admiralty, seeking relief for their "husbands and ffathers ... now in Slavery in Argeir and Sally." Such appeals followed almost every year, including one in 1640 from the slaves themselves—3,000 "poor seamen captive in Algiers," who asked Parliament to remember both them and the

other 1,500 British captives held in Tunis, where they were forced to "endur[e] hard &. extreme laboure, want of sustenance, and greevious torments." Strapped for cash and without a fleet powerful enough to really punish the corsairs, neither James nor Charles had much of an answer to the petitioners, beyond forbidding more petitioning. They said that the crowds of beseeching women "do so importune his Majestic at all turnes, that he is forced sometimes to geve theme hard usage both in wordes and worse."

It has been suggested by more than one historian that the government's failure to do much on behalf of the English, Irish, and Scottish slaves in North Africa was a root cause—admittedly one among many—of the social unrest that eventually pushed England over the edge into civil war in the 1640s. Certainly it was a disturbing situation. Estimates were regularly coming hack to London that the corsairs "did daily carry off English and Scots like cattle;" that anywhere from 3,000 to 5,000 British subjects were held in bondage; and that—even more disturbing—the "bold Turke" was coming right to the British Isles in his search for new victims.[4]

Already by the 1610s there were sightings of "Turkish pirates" in English waters. In 1616 one of these made so bold as to sail right into the Thames estuary, getting as far as Leigh-on-Sea before he was captured. By the following decade, the time for mere sightings had passed and the attacks began. In 1625, the mayor of Plymouth wrote to the Privy Council, in a letter headed "Haste haste posthaste," speaking ominously of how the raiders left their mark, with "fisherboats ... very lately found floating on the seas, having neither man nor any tackle in them."[5] This was just the prelude to a systematic attack that year by the Salé rovers, who coordinated an assault on the northern and southern shores of Cornwall a short while later. In all, they carried off around 1,000 terrified villagers and fishermen from Mount's Bay and Looe, on the south coast, and from isolated hamlets on the north.

Sometimes the corsairs were from Salé and sometimes from Algiers. Their ships were two-masted or three-masted polacres or xebecs, as big as a small frigate, though with fewer cannon and a dozen or so banks for oars. The crew of one of the smaller vessels, captured off Salcombe, in Devon, consisted of "nine Dutchmen, six Turks, and three Moors, and one of them a black Moor." The Dutchmen were presumably renegades, come back to their home waters to hunt for booty and slaves,

happily ignoring the peace in force between Holland and England. One of their number was Murat Re'is, originally born Jan Janzoon in Haarlem. Based in Algiers after his conversion, Murat Re'is became notorious all around the English Channel and the Irish Sea in these decades. Sailing with a small fleet of xebecs, he pulled off a series of attacks on shipping and coastal villages all over Devon and Cornwall, before turning to Ireland in 1631. There he sacked the village of Baltimore on the southern tip of County Cork, and essentially carried off the entire population of men, women, and children—some say he took 120 captives, others put the number at 237.[6]

The raids continued for the next quarter century. Between 1629 and 1637, 73 British vessels were seized and 1,473 crewmen and passengers were enslaved by the Algerians. In just half that time, the Salé rovers had taken 64 ships, and the 1,524 British subjects on board had been "sould for slaves." In 1641, it was the turn of the packet John *Filmer,* seized as it was setting out from the little Irish port of Youghal, 100 miles or so up the coast from the by-then demolished and deserted Baltimore. It was just a morning's work for the Algerians to seize around 120 fresh slaves from the *John Filmer.* The men they chained to the oars to serve as galley slaves; the women and children they sent below, for transportation back to Algiers and eventual sale in the market.[7]

Over the course of Charles's attempts at personal rule, the Civil War, and the Commonwealth, the British were largely powerless in stopping the corsairs, who continued buzzing like so many hornets around the realm's ports and shipping. Parliament's efforts in 1642 and 1645 to raise funds for a general redemption only seemed to make British subjects into more tempting targets, bringing the raids to something of a crescendo in the 1640s. Certainly this was the decade when the corsairs were at their most audacious. In 1640, the Algerians were able to assemble a virtual flotilla of raiders, said to number 60 ships, which cruised the Channel as if they owned the place. In 1641, dispatches to London told how "those roguish Turkish pirates" had snatched 60 captives from Penzance, in Cornwall, making them the original Pirates of Penzance. In 1645, the rovers were back, this time with a fleet of seven galleys, and made off "with a great booty and 240 slaves" from the Cornish coast. As late as 1654, the Salé rovers were still busy plundering the West Country, hauling off fresh captives by the score from the villages and fishing boats of Cornwall and

Devon. The English seem to have lost that fearlessness that gained them renown in the days of Francis Drake and Walter Raleigh, and they were reduced instead to lamenting to Parliament how "the fishermen are afraid to put to sea, and we are forced to keep continual watches on all our coasts."[8]

Even after the Restoration, and the establishment under Samuel Pepys of a reasonably effective Royal Navy, the corsairs could not be stopped completely, although they were finally driven out of England's home waters. The treaty that the British persuaded the Algerians to sign in 1662—at gunpoint—instituted an elaborate system of passes that was intended to protect British shipping and sailors. Yet, though the pass system was eventually extended to both Tunis and Tripoli, the peace frequently collapsed thanks to mutual distrust. Then the corsairs were soon back in business. Just between July, 1677 and October, 1680, according to the 18th-century Orientalist Joseph Morgan, the Algerians took no fewer than 160 British ships, presumably netting between 1,500 and 3,000 slaves. The Moroccans, under their new sultan, Moulay Ismail, would soon make those totals go much higher.

The Algerians were finally pummeled into submission, though not so much by the Royal Navy, whose main success was burning the corsair fleet at anchor in the Algiers harbor in 1671. Instead, the work had to be done by the French, who bombarded the city on three separate occasions in the 1680s, using their newly invented mortars to do the job. Morocco was a tougher nut, since Moulay Ismail's court and the center of the sultanate's power lay far inland, out of reach of naval reprisals. Well into the 1710s, lists and petitions circulated in London enumerating the hundreds of Britons enslaved in Salé and Moulay Ismail's capital at Meknes. Not until 1713, when Great Britain took over Gibraltar and Port Mahon in Majorca, as rewards for the War of Spanish Succession, could the British establish naval bases close enough to Morocco to have some effect. Before long, the actual risk of enslavement had largely receded for Britain's subjects on the high seas. The corsairs learned to find their victims among the less well-defended Italians and Greeks.

Still, it took the British several more generations to put this difficult and somewhat embarrassing chapter of their history behind them and to forget about the years when their coasts were plundered, their neighbors enslaved, and fleets of odd-looking ships with odder crews made

themselves right at home in the Channel and the Irish Sea. Two centuries after the last Salé rover had been chased off from the Cornish coast, parents there were still threatening their misbehaving children that the “Sallyman” would come and carry' them away. A good, rousing song was needed to push those troubled times and evil memories into the background and out of mind. And so, when “Rule, Britannia” came on the scene, the British were ready for it, prepared not to dwell any longer on their somewhat pusillanimous past, but to shake their fists at any “Sallymen" who might dare to threaten the new United Kingdom in years to come. And so they sang of Britannia:

> The haughty tyrants ne’er shall tame:
> Ail their attempts to bend thee down,
> Will but arouse thy generous flame,
> But work their woe, and thy renown.
> Rule, Britannia! Britannia rule the waves!
> Britons never never never will be slaves!

CHAPTER 4

SLAVES COME AWD SLAVES GO

In 1640, the 3,000 to 5,000 British sailors and fishermen said to be languishing in the slave pens of North Africa were enough to disturb the public, get petition writers busy, and spur Parliament to debate, if not action. Yet those Britons were only a small fraction of the slaves supposedly held in Barbary. Since the 1580s, when observers—ambassadors, missionaries, and slaves—first began estimating how many Christian captives were in Muslim hands, they regularly claimed that close to 10 times that many Europeans were enslaved in North Africa. For the course of about a century', such estimates—of which there are over 100 for the major North African ports—varied somewhat, but not by much. In the main they added up to something like to the calculation reached by Pierre Dan, a priest of the Trinitarian order. Father Dan visited Algiers and Tunis on a ransoming expedition in 1634, and in his massive *Histoire de Barbaric et de ses corsaires,* inspired by the voyage, he offered the following as to how many Christians were enslaved in all the corsair bases of the Maghreb, between Sale and Tripoli:

> As to the slaves of both sexes that are in Barbary today, there are a quantity of them from all the Christian nations, such as France, Italy, Spain, England, Germany, Flanders, Holland, Greece, Hungary', Poland, Slovania, Russia, and so forth. The number of these poor captives reaches about thirty-six thousand, according to the enumeration that 1 have carried out on the spot and to the records that have been furnished and sent to me by the Christian Consuls who live in the Corsair Cities.[1]

Christian slave populations in North Africa remained fairly steady over the century running from 1580 to 1680. The largest concentration of slaves was always to he found in Algiers, where corsairing was the chief (some said only) industry, and there were between 20,000 and 30,000 Europeans in bondage, according to virtually all estimates. In Tunis and Morocco there were one-quarter to one-fifth as many—around 5,000 or 6,000 each—while in Tripoli there were far fewer: sometimes fewer than 500. Other cities along the Barbary Coast, like Mascara (modern-day Mouaskar), Bona (Annaha), Constantine (Qacentina), and Bougia (Bejaia) might have had from a few dozen to 100.

In the late 17th century, the slave population of Algiers fell fairly sharply. One reason was epidemic disease, hut there were other causes as well, indicative of a long-term decline in the city's fortunes as a corsair and slaving center. Father Ivone Lorance, Rome's head missionary in Algiers pointed out some of the causes in a letter home:

> The first and principal reason of this decline is that the Corsairs are not taking so many prizes, both because their ships and vessels are no longer so numerous—-between big and small, they have ... [fewer than thirty]—and because they are not well equipped, [their ships] cannot manage to take anything but small, weak prey ... The second reason for this decrease is some [slaves] are daily being ransomed, and the recent redemptions have taken away many of them.[2]

The slave populations in Morocco and Tunis followed this Algerian pattern, though without declining so sharply. Thanks to the ambitious building schemes of Moulay Ismail, sultan of Morocco from 1672 to 1727, slave numbers there actually went up somewhat in the early 18th century. In the main, though, both slave captures and slave populations in the Maghreb traced this broad cycle of a 16th- and 17th-century boom followed by an 18th-century decline. Only the political instability brought on by the Napoleonic Wars saw a resurgence of Islamic slaving in the Mediterranean, as the number of captives in Algiers and Tunis doubled or even tripled in the space of just a few years.

It was a cycle traced by faith slaving throughout the Muslim Mediterranean. All the major cities—Alexandria, Cairo, Aleppo, Smyrna, and Constantinople (Istanbul), had significant slave populations between 1500 and 1700. Cairo was said to have been home to some 12,000 to

15,000 slaves, out of a population of perhaps 250,000. The heart of slavery in the Levant, however, was Constantinople. Seat *of* the Ottoman sultan and his court, the city was permeated with slavery, propped up by the labors and loyalties of tens of thousands of janissaries, eunuchs, concubines, and courtiers. In a certain sense, everybody (and therefore nobody) was the slave of the sultan, but some were more clearly slaves than others. These included the workers in the city's shipyards (several thousand), slave oarsmen in the imperial galleys (between 5,000 and 20,000), and sundry thousands of construction workers, longshoremen, and sailors—not to mention some thousands more in private hands. Certainly it would be no exaggeration to assume that there were, on average, 30,000 of these "working" slaves in the city between 1500 and 1800.

The story' of Mediterranean slavery' was not simply one of Muslims carrying European Christians off into bondage, however. For one thing, a good many of the slaves in Turkish hands, especially in Egypt and the Levant, were of African origin, initially Sudanese or Ethiopian, later from south of the Sahara. More significantly for our purposes here, though, Europeans were slavers on a vast scale as well, and during the 16th and much of the 17th centuries they enslaved at least as many Muslims as they took Black men and women from West Africa.

The most avid of those who hunted Muslims were the Spanish and Italians, and it was in Iberia and Italy that most of the enslaved "Turks" and "Moors" ended up. The Italian historian Salvatore Bono, who has studied both Christian and Muslim slavery for over half a century', has estimated that, for much of the 1500s and 1600s, a total of 40,000 to 50,000 slaves, most of them Muslim, were held in the various Italian city states. Captive populations in Italy peaked sometime in the early 1600s, and in the city of Naples, for example, Bono found records indicating the presence of well over 10,000 Muslim slaves. Apparently no one has tried to make a similar estimate of Muslim slave populations in Spain for these years. Part of the problem may be that there were so many Black African and Amerindian slaves in Iberia as well, and the Spanish quite typically referred to them all as *esclavos.* What scattered evidence we have points to something on the order of 30,000 slaves of Islamic background held on the peninsula during these same centuries. Most of them were in port towns like Lisbon, Cadiz, Seville, and, especially in the coastal province of Malaga—where there were

supposedly upwards of 10,000 slaves—half Black Africans and half Moors. Other such captives were scattered about the peninsula, laboring in mines, on farms, in powder mills, at construction sites, building roads, rowing in the royal galleys, and so forth.

We know somewhat more about the slaving activities of the Knights of St. John in Malta. This crusading order, engaged in perpetual holy war against Islamic expansion in the Mediterranean, picked up a great many Muslim slaves in the course of battling Ottoman Turks and the Barbary corsairs. In part, they culled slaves out of necessity—just to row their galleys required several thousand oarsmen. At the same time, their capital of Valetta ran to a great extent on slave power, used in construction and around the docks. Slaving was also a profitable business for the Knights, who sold their surplus captives, without too many questions asked, to those in other Christian nations who needed servile labor. In its day, the slave market in Valetta was just as busy as those in Algiers and Constantinople.

The North Africans, Levantines, Iberians, Italians, and Maltese were responsible for most of the slaves of faith captured and trafficked around the Mediterranean. There were some smaller players as well, though. In their royal galleys the French typically had anywhere from 200 to several thousand "Turks" chained to the oars, along with a similar number of "free" men and convicts. So did the Venetians, even though they, like the French, had treaties with the Ottoman sultans that supposedly banned the practice. During the later 1600s, a number of small ports in Albania, Montenegro, and western Greece also flourished as slaving centers—at any given time 500 or more Christian slaves, mostly Italians, could be found there, waiting either to be ransomed or sold to the Ottoman imperial galleys. Basically, any backwater in the Mediterranean, no matter how small or flyblown, could turn out to be the unhappy home of a few slaves. In the 1670s, for example, a couple of Italians turned out to be living in "dolorous servitude in the Port of Suez, a small and ignoble locale on the Red Sea." A 1548 report indicated that some Moorish slaves were held in eastern Sicily—19 in the village of Linguaglossa and another 7 in Giarratana, both places miles from the nearest seacoast.[3]

This is the profile of Mediterranean faith slaving during its heyday. In communities large and small, from Valencia to Smime, human bondage was a familiar part of the social fabric. The unfree were bought and sold like any other commodity. They were put to work, sexually abused, bnitally

punished, and—quite often—set free. For those who owned them, they were a labor source, but perhaps their real use was as signifiers of power and prestige. From one end of the Mediterranean to the other, these faith slaves probably added up to something like 100,000 individuals at any given time between 1500 and 1700. Thereafter, their numbers went into decline throughout the region—the falling slave populations we noticed in Algiers were also registered in Malta, Seville, and, eventually, in Constantinople. By the end of the 18th century, Mediterranean faith slave totals, despite an uptick during the tumultous 1790s, had dropped to 10 percent or less of what they had been 100 years earlier.

Within each of these long cycles, first of boom, then decline, overall slave populations apparently remained fairly stable. Still, there was a continual, small-scale flux, as slave numbers were eroded by a variety of short-term causes and then replenished with new captures. This coming and going of slaves is worth investigating. It can tell us a good deal about the experience of enslavement, by exposing the underpinnings of slave demographics. It can also show some of the common ground that bondage shared in Christendom and the Muslim lands. And, perhaps surprisingly, the ebb and flow of slave populations, short-term though they may have been, can be extremely informative about the overall scale of human bondage in the Mediterranean.

Bureaucratically considered, faith slaves tended to get slotted into one of three different categories. This was the breakdown used in an 18th-century Parliamentary report, titled “A List of Captives at Mequiness [Meknes] on Sept. 29th. 1719.” In it, the British in Moroccan hands were counted as “Living 188 / Dead 53 / Turn’d Moor 16." Seen another way, out of 257 British slaves captured by the Salé rovers during these years, around 21 percent had died and 6 percent had converted to Islam, eroding the population hy 27 percent. Of course, this list only dealt with those Britons still in Meknes. Others had somehow gotten away, and these too were a form of attrition for the British slaves.[4]

As these scant figures make clear, slave numbers mostly went down because the slaves died. This was the eventuality that constantly loomed over slaves, from the first moment that they fell into captivity. Many Europeans were so terrified at even the prospect of capture by corsairs that they went passive, “surprised by a panic terror,” and were consequently unable to look out for themselves or sometimes even eat. In this they resembled their Black African counterparts, many of

whom died soon after being loaded onto their slave ship bound for the Americas. Working on their minds was the effect of what the French historian Michel Fontenay has called "the effect of psychological shock." The British slave Francis Brooks, newly arrived in Morocco in 1681, wrote of its insidious impact:

> what betwixt their Diet and Lodging on the cold ground, together with the[ir] hard Usage, many of them fell sick ... and some by [the overseers] have been so severely whipp'd, that they have dropp'd down Dead ... After the poor Christians had undergone their hard Labour and cruel Stripes for the space of five Months time, many of them fell sick and died.'

Not all slaves were treated so badly in Barbary, of course—some, as many modern scholars have argued, were positively coddled. Still, for many the work was hard, brutal, and dangerous, the rations often minimal to the point of starvation. Slaves set to labor in heavy construction were regularly injured or killed—hit by falling stones or run over by heavily laden carts. Rowers on the corsair galleys were not only driven mercilessly, but were also at constant risk of drowning, since they were never unchained from their oars, even if their ship were sinking. Then there were the beatings. In their narratives and letters, slaves wrote about getting beaten so often that the frequency must have seemed remarkable even to them, in an age where personal violence was commonplace. They were thrashed with sticks, whips, tarred ropes, and cudgels. Some overseers preferred to use a "bulls pizel,"—a bull's penis that was stretched and dried until it was "four or five foot long, round at the end by which he holds it, but widening by degrees towards the other end where it is neer half a foot in breadth." Slaves were beaten to make them work harder or to make them stop what they were doing. They were beaten because their masters and overseers despised them, but also because slave and master often failed to understand each other, as they tried to make their orders and responses plain in the half-comprehended pidgin of the Mediterranean, known as Lingua Franca. The Flemish slave Emanuel d'Aranda recalled how on several occasions a misunderstanding got him a serious thrashing:

> We were taught another Trade ... to wit, the pounding of Wheat in a Stone-mortar ... When the Wheat was pounded, it was put

> into bags, and by misfortune there fell a little of it on the ground, which the Guardian taking notice of, [he] said to me, *Pilla esse cani,* that is *Take* up *that, you Dog;* but I not understanding by his Language what he meant by *Pilla,* he gave me three or four bangs with a Cudgel over the back, which caus'd the blood almost to gush out, for 1 had nothing about me but my Shirt.[6]

Such beatings were everyday occurrences in Barbary—d'Aranda mentioned receiving several, usually because he was slow to respond to orders. Lashings were just as commonplace for Muslim slaves in Christian chain gangs. Simply sitting down on the job, according to one slave, provoked his overseer to come rushing over, shouting '"Why workest thou not?' and with that strake me with a cudgell.'' Beatings also had their role in keeping slaves submissive. The English slave William Okeley, who admitted that, early on in his slavery, "My neck was not yet bowed nor my heart broken to the yoke of bondage," got off to a rather bad start in his new master's household, in Algiers. By way of small talk with the master's father, Okeley decided to express his opinion, in gestures and sign language, "That their Prophet was but a Cobler." Rather than a stimulating theological exchange with the old man, this got him "severe blows [with] what ever Rage and Fury his Hands or Feet could Execute." When the master came in and heard the cause of this fracas, he pulled out a large knife and seemed intent on disemboweling Okeley on the spot. Saved only by the timely intervention of his master's wife, Okeley massaged his bruises and reflected:

> That 1 was but Martyr to my own Folly: this was not a place for Dispute, but Obedience. Well, I learnt from hence two Lessons: one, that when the Body is a Slave, the Reason must not expect to be Free; and where the whole outward Man is in Bondage, the Tongue must not plead exemption ... and this wit I bought, as it fell out, a pretty good pennyworth.[7]

Some modern scholars have assumed that masters—whether Christian or Muslim—were too conscious of a slave's value to ever ruin him with purely gratuitous beatings. Obviously, though there were occasions where mere economic considerations were given second place to more immediate emotions, as Okeley discovered. The Englishman George Elliot had the bad fortune to discover another way a slave could bring down a beating from his master—by making him look like

a fool. Newly sold, Elliott realized that his master, one Hamed Lucas, believed him to be a person of considerable value back home. Elliott's attempts to convince him otherwise turned what had been a reasonable and polite conversation into a very different encounter:

> [My master told] me that he had Paid a considerable sum of Money for me, which he did on the Prospect of a Ransom for my Liberty, proportionable to his Expectations and my Quality ... [but upon hearing] that 1 found myself under much worse Circumstances than other Christian Captives ... [such] that 1 should very much contribute to the calling in Question his Prudence and Judgement, because all the Town would admire when they shall see the Event, that the wise *Hamed Lucas was* imposed upon in giving 600 Pieces of Eight for a poor Slave who was not worth a *Maravidi* [i.e., a farthing]. At which last Words, he was so Transported with Passion that he showered down a whole Torrent of Blows upon me, and lighting unluckily upon a Stick, he broke my Head in several Places, and never ceast till he made me all in a Gore blood. I was not able to Stir, and the cruel Villian permitted me to lye a little while; afterwards he comes again afresh, and drags me out of his House into the Streets, and then falls upon me anew, beating me all along the Streets [and I thought] that 1 should hardly live out the Night.[8]

Beatings also had a key place in the formal punishment regimen. In severity, they fell somewhere between loading an offender with more chains—up to 100 pounds—and executing him by decapitation, impalement, or dismembering. Known among slaves as the *bastinado,* or by the Portuguese term *falaca,* such beatings could be ordered for attempted escape or theft, but also for minor infractions. The American slave John Foss wrote of "people being bastinadoed for very small offenses or rather no offence at all," including "a slave [who] received three hundred bastinadoes for no greater offence than pulling six hairs out of a horse's tail, which belong to one of the great men of the Regency." Applying the bastinado usually called for a kind of portable stocks to hold the feet secure, though the beaters could also make do with the simple sort of device that William Okeley described:

> They have a strong staff, about six Foot long, in the middle whereof are bored two holes. Into these holes a Cord is put, and

> the ends of the Cord fastened on the one side of the staff, with knots, so that it makes a Loop in the other side. Into this Loop of the Cord, both the Feet of the Person Condemned to this Punish' ment are put; then two lusty Fellows, one at each end of the staff, lift it up in their Arms, and twisting the staff about, till his Feet are fast pinch'd with the Cord by the Ankles, they raise up his Feet with the soles upwards, well nigh as high as their shoulders, and in this posture they hold them, the poor man the meanwhile resting on with his Neck and Shoulders on the ground. Then comes another lusty sturdy Knave behind him, and with a tough short Truncheon, gives him as many violent blows on the soles of his Feet as the Council shall Order.[9]

Many slaves did not survive this ordeal. "Lacerated by the many beatings they received for no reason, from desperation they gave themselves over to death," as one observer put it. Others were so crippled that they were effectively useless, their "flesh like beaten liver." After a bastinado of several hundred strokes, according to d'Aranda, a slave, "with his feet all black by reason of the blows ... [had to be] carried by slaves ... for it was impossible for him, I will not say to go, but so much as touch the ground with his feet." The French priest Dominick Busnot told the perhaps apocryphal story of how Moulay Ismail came upon two slaves who had taken a moment of rest while carrying water:

> He call'd them, and order'd each of them five hundred Bastinados, which put the Hip of one of them out; but it was set again some time after, by the violent Operation of a second Bastinado, which he receiv'd on Account of his Lameness, because he could not Work fast enough.[10]

Beaten and overworked, where "meagre famine leads its doleful train," slaves in Barbary died at alarming rates, much as slaves did on sugar plantations in the West Indies. In their weakened, damaged condition, they were particularly susceptible to disease, made worse by their unsanitary living conditions and the dirty jobs they did—emptying out privies and sewers, among others. As often as not, their recorded ailments were as vague—"fevers" or "catarrh"—as they were fatal. Some diagnoses were more specific, however. John Foss noted that in 1794

there was an outbreak of smallpox in Algiers, and "four of my countrymen died of this epidemical disease in the course of a month." Much more feared, however, was the plague—"that fatal and tremendous disorder"—which was a regular visitor to the cities of Barbary and a particular terror in the slave pens.[11]

According to the Venetian dragoman Giovanni Baptista Salvago writing in 1625, the plague came to the cities of North Africa "every third or fourth year." This pattern seems to have continued throughout the 17th century, as the pestilence hopped from port to port, more or less unopposed by any measures of quarantine. European missionaries, stuck at their posts, expressed their horror and anger at the seeming nonchalance with which the local authorities reacted to outbreaks. They blamed what they supposed was Muslim fatalism for such inaction—for "to have acted otherwise, would have argued an Opposition to the eternal Decrees of God." The priests themselves were rather less fatalistic, though just as helpless, as the Capuchin missionary' Basilio da Torino made clear in his note from Tunis in 1707:

> Again we have been in some fear ... for there have come here from Chios three vessels of this Bey, infected because of some merchandise loaded on them; and along the way there died [aboard] more than thirty persons from the plague. None the less, having reached Porto Farina [the port of Tunis], the passengers were allowed to quickly disembark and everyone was left to come and go where he pleased, without any caution.[12]

Plague passed so frequently through Barbary that it is sometimes difficult to tell when one outbreak ended and another began. Episodes might last a year or two and could easily kill 10 percent or 15 percent of the population. Particularly virulent outbreaks of the disease, known as the "Great Plague," or *Konia,* could carry off upwards of 30 percent of a city's inhabitants, and these occurred depressingly often. The estimates of fatalities are necessarily vague, but impressive. *Konia were* said to have killed over one-third of the population of Algiers (30,000 to 50,000 people) in 1620-1621, 1654-1657, 1663—1665, 1691, and 1740-1742. Similar outbreaks hit Tunis in 1622, 1644, 1664-1665, and 1787-1788.

Locked up in their crowded and filthy *bagnos,* "always swarming with Vermin, and full of Mange and Scabs," slaves were especially susceptible to plague. Very likely they died at rates as high or higher than the general population. When the disease broke out, missionaries worked overtime to say the last rites and bur)' the dead. In the process, a good many of them died themselves, from coming in contact with the sick. In 1691, the Sicilian missionary Giuseppe Gianola wrote to Rome from Tunis how "after ten months of plague ... around forty thousand Turks and Moors have died, and of my Christian sons a little more than a thousand, among whom I have lost three priests." One priest who was comparatively lucky was Jean Levacher, Rome's head missionary in Tunis, during an especially severe Konia in 1664—65. Having already come down with plague twice, Lavacher wrote of himself how he had:

> Recently caught the plague again, from being exposed to the poor infected Christians, of whom he put in the ground a good 600 with his own hands, after having given them the Sacraments; and, after gaining his health after ever)' hope [was lost] he went out into the country and to Biierte ... where there are many Christian slaves.[15]

It is reasonable to expect that Europeans, when enslaved in Barbary, died at higher rates than their relatives back home in Europe. Michel Fontenay, who did an analysis of the 2,450 Christians enslaved in Tripoli between 1668 and 1678, concluded that a death rate of around 20 percent per year was "normal" there. This is quite close to what we already noted for British slaves in Morocco in 1719, though what was "normal" clearly depended on both slaves and circumstances. When a high proportion of women, children, and the aged were brought in by the corsairs, death rates might be much higher. The 450 captives carried off by Muslim raiders from the Dalmatian town of Perasto in 1624, for example, were "almost entirely women and children." A year later only two-thirds of them were still alive, the rest having evidently succumbed to Fortenay's "psychological shock."

When those brought to Barbary came from regions of very different climate or customs, there were also the effects of culture shock to take into account. We are not sure of the exact number of Irish taken from Baltimore in 1631—perhaps 120 or perhaps 237—but it does appear that only the barest handful survived their stay in Algiers to return

home, 10 or 20 years later. The 300 or so Icelanders—taken by corsairs in 1627 from the Westmann Islands off Iceland's south coast and from the eastern fjords—were reduced to only 70, eight years later. Of these, according to d'Aranda, who saw them moping around Algiers in chains, "some few of them do still patiently endure the heavy yoke of slavery," but as far as the others went, "many dy'd by the change of air; others, out of a despair of being redeem'd, renounc'd their Religion." D'Aranda pitied these wretches, so far from their wild northern lands, and he wrote of them:

> Though the Inhabitants of Iseland thought they had no othere enemies than Poverty and Ice, the one whereof lyes perpetually, the other, for eight months of the year very heavy upon them; yet Algier, though a detestable avarice, envy'd them that which no other Nation did, the only happiness they had—liberty.[14]

On the other hand, the great majority of those enslaved were not elderly or frail, hut active sailors, soldiers, and young peasants. These were the sort of men whom one observer termed "stout and lusty," and their chances of survival in slavery were likely to be better, if not exactly spectacular. Pierre Dan, for instance, reported that 989 French seamen were brought to Algiers as slaves between 1628 and 1634- During that time only 119, or around 12 percent of them, died in captivity. That so many men who were accustomed to the "hard usages" of the sea ended up in slavery may mean that Fontenay's estimate was a hit high. It might he more prudent to set the "regular" death rate in Barbary at around 15 percent per year, adding perhaps another 2 percent to account for the plague, which came so regularly as to be almost endemic.[15]

As with the English list of 1719, those who tallied Christian slaves in Barbary often counted the living and then added two types of casualties—the actual dead and those who had "turned Turk." For the premodern mind (and certainly for a cleric), the one was about as bad as the other—if anything it was worse to renounce Christianity and lose one's soul than merely to die physically. Those who thought they actually had to choose between death and damnation could find that the choice was not always so clear cut. Often quite young and completely on their own, many slaves felt deserted by their kin at home.

Seemingly facing a lifetime of bondage in the land of Islam, many a slave wondered why he or she should bother to hold on to Christianity. Nicola Oronzio Sarcinelli, captured near Barletta, in southern Italy, and hauled oft to bondage in Albania, let loose his mass of conflicted feelings on the subject of conversion when he wrote home to his father in 1739:

> Master, do not let me lose myself in desperation, because if ... 1 see that you do nothing, and I will not be able to suffer [this] any more, [then) I too will turn Turk, because 1 am a youth of twelve years old, and 1 cannot suffer the beatings that they give me every day, and with the chains that I always carry' on my hands and feet, 1 cannot do otherwise.[16]

Conversion to Islam was almost absurdly simple—many slaves believed that all they had to do was hold up a finger and recite, in Arabic, "There is no God but Allah, and Mohamed is his Prophet." On no more than an impulse many Christians apparently took the plunge and abjured. Not all of them got what they had expected, though, since, as Joseph Morgan noted, abjuring only meant that a man was "freed from the Oar, tho' not from his Patron's Service." A renegade was still a slave, in other words, though custom held that he should not have to do the especially nasty tasks given to Christian slaves—rowing in the galleys, digging rocks, working in construction, or cleaning out sewers. Instead, many renegades found themselves working as the overseers of the slaves doing such tasks. Others might set up enterprises of their own, and some took up corsairing. Some lists we have from the early 1600s of the Algiers galleys and their captains, or *re'is,* indicate that well over half of these corsairs leaders might be renegade Christians.

According to many accounts, Barbary was positively crawling with renegades. Pierre Dan claimed there were 9,500 of them just in Algiers and perhaps 14,000 in all of the Maghreb. Generally speaking, if we are to believe a number of observers, there were about one-third to one-half as many renegades as actual slaves. While most of them converted from slavery, some had come to Barbary as free Christians and converted once arrived, presumably after they saw the additional possibilities a new religion could open up. According to John Rawlins,

their motives were largely economic, and consequently all the more despicable. They were, he said, "seduced with the hopes of riches, honour, preferment, and such like devlish baits to catch the souls of mortal men and entangle frailty in the tarriers of horrible abuses and imposturing deceit." Others evidently decided to leave Europe for North Africa because they "wanted to abandon the Religion and flee from ecclesiastical persecutions." Still others may have been lured by the reputed sexual license permitted in Barbary. Missionaries, ransomers, and slaves regularly denounced renegades as especially prone to "[debauch] a Lad" or for "making [male slaves] give in to their horrid desires." Despite their undoubted contributions to local economies, renegades were not always much appreciated by their new Muslim brothers, who found that they were hardly paragons of Islam. Joseph Morgan painted a vivid picture of how, in the 16th and 17th centuries:

> Nothing was more common to be seen in the Shops, and even in the Streets of Algiers, than Parties of *Renegadoes,* sitting publically on Mats, costly Carpets and Cushions, playing Cards and Dice, thrumming Guitars, and singing *a la Christianesca,* enebriating like Swine, till the very- last Day of the Moon *Shadban* [Ramadan], and, in their drunken Airs, ridiculing, and even reviling the Mahometans and their Religion. At all which, the *Turks* would, commonly, only shake their heads and smile: Nay, the *Bashas* [pashas] themselves, even such as them as were *Turks,* would only say ... "Well! These *Renegadoes* are neither *Christians,* Mussulmans, nor Jews! They have no Faith, nor Religion at all!"[17]

There was also the problem, from the slave owner's point of view, that once a slave converted he could no longer be made to do hard work, nor ransomed back to Christendom. Though it might be useful to have someone around to serve in a supervisory capacity, many masters were more intent on sweating their slaves and then eventually selling them for a profit. As a result, slaves' attempts to embrace Islam might be opposed by their owners, sometimes violently. Emanuel d'Aranda told just such a story, of a Frenchmen belonging to the great slave owner Ali Pegelin. Having served for a while as a galley oarsman and deciding that he "was not able to brook that kind of life," the slave decided to convert, knowing that "being once turn'd Turks, [slaves] are not oblig'd to row as the Christians are." Not surprisingly, Ali Pegelin

refused to accept this opportunistic conversion, but the Frenchman went ahead anyway, getting himself a "Turkish habit [clothing] ... shaving himself after the Turkish mode, [and giving] himself the name of *Mustafa."* Hearing what was up, Ali Pegelin accosted him one day, addressing him with his Christian name of John (or Jean). The Frenchman replied:

> "My name is Mustafa and not John." Pegelin seeing him in that [outfit] call'd four slaves, who having laid him all along on the ground, cudgell'd him so long till at last he cry'd out. "My name is John, and not Mustafa! 1 am a Christian and not a Turk! 1 will put on my Christian habit!" Thus it may be said that Pegelin cudgell'd a Christian into his Christianity, which he would have renounc d.[xi] is

Despite efforts to restrain them, slaves kept turning Turk and in considerable numbers. Alarmist missionaries and clerics warned their readers that "it is a certainty that of the Christians taken by the Turks and Corsairs, the majority abjure the Faith," and though this was no doubt an exaggeration, the rates were significant. Jean-Baptiste Gramaye claimed that, out of roughly 8,000 Christians taken by the Algerians between 1609 and 1619, precisely 1,925 adults and around 300 children—more than one-quarter of the total—had been "seduced" into Islam. Pierre Dan noted that about one-sixth of the 986 French slaves brought to Algiers from 1628 to 1634 went renegade. Hoping to get softer treatment, it was said, some 50 out of 200 Spanish infantrymen, captured in 1675 while en route to Italy, converted to Islam "within a few days."[19]

Although these conversions did not actually lower slave populations, they did erode the number of men and women available to do the unpleasant and dangerous tasks on which the coercive side of slavery was premised. From a social and economic standpoint, slave conversions had the same overall effect as slave deaths, since either way fresh captives had to be brought in to replace those who were no longer doing the work. Judging by the estimates we have of renegade populations and from anecdotal evidence, it seems reasonable to assume that around 3 percent or 4 percent of the total slave population in Barbary converted every year. That would be around 1,000 or 1,200 men, women, and children—in line with the rate that the Portuguese Friar Jaono dos Sanctos ascribed just to Algiers in the 1620s, when he wrote

that every year "above nine hundred become Mahumetan apostates besides about fifty boys yearly circumcised against their wills."[-0]

Slave populations did not only erode through death and denial. Ransoming, as we will see later on, played a significant role as well, especially as rhe centuries advanced and the forces of business and religion began to tame Mediterranean slaving of some of its more Wild-West aspects. By the mid-17th century if not sooner, Christians were learning the complex routines needed to collect ransoming funds, travel to Barbary, and haggle for slaves. Each European state tried its own ways of bringing its subjects out of bondage, some more successful than others. The British, as already noted, tended to rely more on military force than ransoming. Their approach produced a few significant successes mixed with long periods where there was little communication between Britain and Barbary, and English slaves languished in captivity, growing in number and while declining in hope.

.More consistent, and therefore ultimately more productive, were the ransoming expeditions organized by the Spanish crown under the direction rhe Carbolic redemptive orders, the Trinitarians and the Mercedarians. Apologists for both orders claimed great success in the business—the Trinitarian Father Francesco di San Lorenzo asserted in 1654 that his order had, over the course of 450 years, brought back "more than two hundred thousand Slaves of one and the other sex, of even state and quality." This may be an exaggeration—Paul Deslandres. writing in 1903, put the figure at around half that—but some success is undeniable. Seventeenth-century observers like William Okeley marveled at how "The Spaniards every Year return a considerable sum of money to Aiders to be employed in the Redemption of such of their own country as are there in Slavery," and according to the Trinitarian themselves, their order ransomed an average of something over two hundred Spanish slaves a year in the 1600s. The Mercedarians were perhaps responsible for as many, or a hit less, while a number of semi-secular state agencies probably brought in that many again.[21]

When we include those who raised their own funds or who, like Emanuel d'Aranda, arranged for a slave swap, we might conclude that as many as 1,000 men and women got out of slavery' this way each year. Their efforts consequently lowered slave populations in Barbary by another 3 percent or 4 percent. It was a surprisingly small portion of all those enslaved, considering the considerable work and huge

expenditures that went into these expeditions—not to mention the attention they have drawn, both at the time and more recently.

If anything caught the attention of contemporaries, though, it was escapes. Though they had minimal impact on slave populations, daring getaways were an exciting and central narrative element in slave stories, virtually from the beginning of the genre. One of the earliest published English captivity tales was a Great Escape saga of planning and stealth, set in Alexandria in 1577 and involving no fewer than 266 Christian slaves, all led to freedom by the bold English captive John Fox. John Rawlins's story, which played an important part in mobilizing British public opinion on the slavery issue in 1622, was another of these swashbuckling tales. Rawlins, together with the rest of the enslaved crew of the British "ship of Bristol, called the *Exchange,"* rose up, overpowered, and slaughtered the Turks who had captured them, then sailed in triumph back to Britain.

Not all these escapes from bondage read like they were scripted in Hollywood, though they could still find an avid readership back home, once published. William Okeley wrote his own tale of captivity and liberation only after many years of urging by his friends, who perhaps hoped that publishing his adventures would stop him from constantly talking about them. Okeley languished for more than four years in Algiers, before he realized that, while escape may have been a dangerous undertaking, it was his only alternative to getting "habituated to Bondage" and spending the rest of his days in Barbary. Enrolling six other Englishmen (he seems to have mistrusted slaves of other nationalities), Okeley concocted a scheme to escape, not in the usual way of stealing a ship, hut rather by building one from scratch. It was, Okeley told his co-conspirators, to be "formed in parcels, and afterwards put together." They would use the cellar of a shop, where a group of English Puritans had once held religious services, "and when it was there built, it might be taken to pieces again and carried out of the City in parcels, and bestowed in private places till things were ripe for Execution."[22]

To smuggle the various pieces out of the cellar, Okeley designed all the wooden parts—the 12-foot keel, the ribs, seats, and oars—out of two or three separate units that could be joined together by nails fixed through holes. As a result, the whole thing was pretty flimsy—especially the oars, which were fashioned out of barrel or hogshead slats. The keel, which was in two pieces, was pilfered by one of their

conspirators who worked as a bricklayer and "used such pieces in leveling his work." Bit by bit, everything was shaped and the canvas that was to cover it all as a makeshift hull was tarred to make it waterproof, though doing so in the confined space of the cellar made Okeley and the others "exceeding sick with the strong and unusual scent of the melted Liquor ... [of] Pitch, Tar, and Tallow." Terrified though they were that someone might sniff them out, they realized they either had to open the cellar doors or pass out. Somehow they got away with this and many other risky steps in the process, and finally everything was ready:

> In our Cellar we fitted all things, we made the Timbers fit to the Keel, and the Canvas fit for the Timbers, and the Seats fit to the whole, and then took all in pieces again, and laying our Heads together, plotted how to convey all out of the Town, and lodge them in secure and trusty places.

It rook them weeks of sneaking around outside the walls of Algiers, before they found a hiding place close enough to a beach, so that, come darkness, they could put the whole thing back together and scuttle with it into the water. Eventually though, they managed to get their boat afloat, on the evening of June 30, 1644, at which point they discovered that the vessel was far too small to hold seven men. Two of the fugitives had to jump out and return to slavery, though considering the little boat's fragility, it may not have been hard to find a couple of volunteers. The remaining five bid their comrades a hasty farewell and set out, four of them rowing steadily and a fifth continuously bailing (see Figure 4.1). They rowed all night, trying to navigate by the stars. With the coming of dawn, however, they discovered that a northerly wind and the tides had pushed them back almost to where they had started. Yet, though they were in plain view of the harbor, no one apparently noticed them in their tiny boat, and another day's continual rowing got them out of sight from the coast.

The runaways' troubles were hardly over, though. Clawing away with their painful and awkward oars, they baked in the hot July sun. Within a day they had eaten their meager rations of bread and drunk all their water. Before too long they were reduced to drinking seawater and their own urine. Some of them began raving. After five days, as Okeley put

Figure 4.1 The Escape of Five Englishmen from Algiers in a Handcrafted Boat, 1644. William Okeley, *Ebenezer: or, a Small Monument of Great Mercy* (London, 1675).

it, "we were on the brink of the brink of despair, and all hope that we should be saved, utterly perished," but they were (as he saw it) miraculously saved by a fortuitous shift in the wind and their discovery of a basking sea turtle, which they killed and ate raw. Things improved. They sighted land, though it still took them a whole night's rowing to reach it. It was Spanish Majorca, in the Balearics, and they found their freedom, though once ashore they could barely walk, since "Our feet had been so parboyled and quodled [coddled] with the Sun's heat, in the Salt water-pickle, that they were very raw and more blister'd."[23]

Okeley and his companions had actually escaped from Algiers, though it was obviously a close-run thing. Despite the incredible hardships the men faced, they still had the energy to bicker and argue—so much that, by the time they were safe in Spanish hands, they refused to talk to each other any more. Others were obviously less fortunate. Some—especially those that stole a ship—were often run down by

pursuing (and vengeful) corsairs. Others simply disappeared at sea-sunk by a storm or killed by hunger and thirst, perhaps all the while arguing as much as Okeley and his fellow fugitives. The great enthusiasm that greeted the publication of Okeley's adventures is a good indication of just how rare—and how difficult—such escapes actually were.

There were other ways to get out of Barbar)', but none of them were easy. Some slaves tried to stow away in one of the merchant ships docked at the harbor, but these were so well guarded by the Algerians, and so thoroughly searched before they were allowed to leave, that it seems that ver)' few managed to pull it off. Those who tried apparently got little help from the merchant captains, who knew that if they were caught helping slaves run, they risked having their vessels impounded and perhaps getting enslaved themselves. It was said that some captains, having set sail and then discovered slave stowaways on board, were so nervous (or so desirous of currying favor) that they promptly set their course back to Barbar)' and delivered the runaways into the hands of the corsairs.

Even planning an escape, as Okeley soon realized, was enormously difficult. Algiers, like all slave cities, was fairly swarming with spies. Usually these were renegades, who would report slaves doing anything out of the ordinary, in the hope of reward or recognition. Well aware that slaves tended to steal even more than usual when plotting escapes, the authorities jealously guarded all materials or tools that might remotely be construed as useful for getting away—especially naval stores. Merchant ships that came to trade famously had to deposit their sails and oars with the customs house, to prevent slaves from stealing them for just such purposes. Okeley was lucky that in his years of slaver)' he had been able to establish himself as a petty merchant who dealt in goods that came in barrels or wooden crates. He was also fortunate in knowing several carpenters and a sailor whom he could invite to join the company, for he himself apparently had few skills as a seaman.

European slaves trying to escape by traveling overland or from inland cities—from Cairo, for example, but especially from the interior of Morocco—faced a whole different set of problems. Rather than worrying about spies and an encompassing sea, these runaways had to fend with deserts and the dangers of thirst, sunstroke, lions, snakes, and poisonous insects. For those slaves who had the money,

the best way to escape was to hire a *metedor,* or smuggler. In Morocco these men were locals who knew the country and the various routes leading from towns like Marrakesh or Meknes to the Spanish redoubts on the coast. The best ones were not only wise in the ways of the desert, but also had the right connections to bribe their way through the cordon of Moroccan troops surrounding each Spanish enclave. Theirs was a risky occupation, though—anyone caught guiding European slaves to freedom could expect an exceptionally painful execution—and the prices they demanded were correspondingly high.

For the great majority of slaves who had no hope of hiring a metedor, escape overland was so obviously daunting as to be a good indicator of madness. The usual technique was to hide outside the city walls during the day's work and get away after the other slaves had been brought back inside at sunset. Concealing oneself from the guards was not easy, however, as Germain Mouette, a French slave at Meknes, recalled. It involved some planning and the cooperation of a several other slaves:

> They gather'd as many Bits of Bread as they could, and dry'd them in the Sun. When they had got enough, we bury'd those Persons in Ditches along the [city] Walls ... all but their Heads, which we cover'd with Weeds, that they might breathe, and then all of us went to ease our selves round about them, that the Moors might loath to come near the Place. At Night they set out, recommending themselves to God, *Fridays* being the properest Days to do this, because then the Moors that work'd with us went at two in the Afternoon to the Mosques ... and whilst those who intended to fly were bury'd, two or three [slaves] kept [the remaining guard] in Discourse, gave him Tobacco, or told him some Story, so that no Notice was taken till Night, when they counted us.[24]

Escape in Morocco was somewhat easier for slaves before the Spanish had been forced out of many of their coastal enclaves and the English abandoned Tangiers in 1684. Through most of the long reign of Moulay Ismail, runaway slaves aimed for the coast and hoped to hit the Spanish fortress city of Oran or the Portuguese redoubt at Magazan (modern-day El-Jadida). When news of a breakout reached the sultan, however, he immediately notified all his local governors and sent mounted guards along all the main highways. "Thus," wrote Mouette,

"so many Sentinels were posted in all Parts, and the ways so strictly guarded for a Fortnight, that it was a sort of Miracle when any escap'd." Forced by necessity to travel overland and at night, most runaways soon came to grief. As Dominick Busnot described it:

> They pass the Days in Woods, Caves, or other such private Places, where they rest and take what little Sustenance they have, always in Dread, and expect the Return of Night to conceal their March by its Darkness. Nothing can be more uneasy than such travelling, which is always in the Dark, along By-ways, through Desarts, and over impracticable Mountains, with little Provision, and in continual Fear.[25]

Escapes, by land or by sea, provided tonic news for those back home, and their arrival in London or Paris was often cause for a great deal of celebration and some bellicose talk of settling scores. They were not really common enough to seriously reduce overall slave numbers, however. The really famous big breakouts, like the one engineered by John Fox in 1577, took place early on in the annals of slavery and in cities like Alexandria, which lacked both established slave pens and fixed routines of guarding large numbers of captives. In places like Algiers, Meknes, and Valetta, slaves were much more a part of the social fabric, and escapes were correspondingly more difficult and less common. Germain Mouette put the matter in perspective, writing of his experience in Meknes, home to some 5,000 slaves, that "As to the Particular of running away, I have known above a Score venture it every Year."[26] In all of Barbary, then, it would have been a good year for escapes if as many as 300 or 400 slaves managed to get away—less than 1 percent of the total slave population, in other words.

Looking at the ways that slave numbers eroded can offer some particular insights into the slave experience itself, and not just in Barbary—all the causes of attrition that we have looked at here were just as valid among the Christian slaves held in the Ottoman Levant and among Muslims enslaved in Christendom. Using the rates of decline that we have estimated—as opposed to the nature of that decline can be informative in other ways, however, and move us beyond the world of anecdotes to that of analysis.

Taking the information we have for Barbary, we find that these various forms of attrition among Christians, if not countered by other

factors, would have reduced slave populations there by something on the order of 24 percent-25 percent per year. Such a rate underscores several things about slavery in North Africa. First of these was the remarkable turnover among slaves there. Most of the captive men and women brought to Barbary changed their status within their first year or two of captivity. The great majority of them died or converted to Islam, and they did so fairly quickly. Getting ransomed was a slower process, but those who managed to make all the necessary arrangements and pay off their masters generally did so sooner rather than later. As to the charity cases, their captivity was longer and more painful, though still not infinite—studies of specific charitable redemptions show that on average the slaves they liberated had been in bondage for five years or less.

It is true that behind this relative froth of coming and going, there was another, more stable slave world. Here were the old-timers who had more or less settled into bondage—those running shops or taverns, the great majority of slave women, and even a few of the galley slaves, some of whom were recorded as surviving in this twilight hell for 30 or even 40 years. Still, these high attrition patterns beg an important question. If so many men and women left the ranks of the enslaved, they must also have been replaced, or slave populations in Barbary would have rapidly collapsed. We know that was not the case, however, since by all accounts the slave populations there remained fairly stable, fluctuating in the century from 1580 to 1680 at between 30,000 and 40,000. In normal societies, population declines are at least partly compensated for by new births, but the slaves in North Africa clearly could not reproduce themselves—their masters would not allow it. Between 80 percent and 90 percent male, these slaves were denied—often rigorously—access to females, slave or free, Christian or Muslim. Slaves in Barbary rarely lived as married families. Should they have children outside of marriage—as happened to many slave women—these were made Muslim and effectively removed from the slave population. Without new births to replenish all those slaves lost through attrition, the only way that depleted numbers could be made up was through new captures. And this is precisely what these rates of erosion permit us to calculate.

We should recall, at this point, just how little we know about the number of Europeans enslaved by the Barbary corsairs. Our ignorance

is in sharp contrast to the detailed knowledge we have on the size of the Black African diaspora—the result of over half a century of research effort. Able to use the extensive archives of European slavers—including bills of lading, insurance policies, and customs accounts—historians and demographers have patiently tallied up the sheer enormity of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, the millions captured, transported, and sold into a life of labor and bondage. As we saw at the outset of this book, there has been no similar effort to gauge the extent of faith slavery in the Mediterranean. In all fairness, the archival materials that would allow such a study are in an appalling state—scattered among a dozen countries and in as many languages, half destroyed, lost, or never existed. Still, without some approximate sense of how many fell victim to this sort of bondage, we can never hope to understand its place in the minds of both Christians and Muslims, nor its historical reverberations down the centuries to the present day.

As we have seen, however, it is reasonable to claim that something like a quarter of the slave population in North Africa had to be replaced every year. We can also be fairly certain that the great majority of fresh slaves were procured through capture (in the Balkans and Caucasus parents sometimes sold their children into slavery). Thus, keeping the slave population of Barbary' stable at around 30,000 men and women would have required around 8,500 new captures a year. Over the course of the century from 1580-1680, this would have added up to around 850,000 slaves all told. If we include likely figures from the first part of the 16th century (when slaving was rampant, but slave counts are lacking) and those from the 18th (when slaving declined sharply, though never stopped) we find that estimate growing by a good 20 percent or 30 percent—to a total that easily exceeds 1 million, probably 1.25 million all told, between 1500 and 1800.

Such a figure is only the roughest of estimates. At best, it offers us a range, a sense of scale, nothing like the actuarial tallies that have been worked out for the African slave trade. That is not really the point, though. Even rough calculations can make it clear that Mediterranean faith slaving was not some minor phenomenon, the sort of petty diversion for people at the time as it has become for many historians today. Rather, it was a huge business, a vital element in the North African economy and a constant wound in the social body of Christendom.

X

This, moreover, is only part of the story. As we have already seen, significant slave populations were reported all around the Mediterranean, some of them as large and as enduring as that of North Africa. A great deal of work remains to be done before the actual extent of these populations will emerge with any clarity, though the outlines can be glimpsed. The Italian historian Salvatore Bono, for example, has collected a great many estimates of Muslim slave numbers in the various port cities of Early Modern Italy. By applying a similar attrition formula as what we have used here, Bono calculated that upwards of half a million Turks and Moors must have been brought to Italy as slaves between 1500 and 1800.

As we have seen, seemingly rather arid demographic materials can say a lot about the life experience of enslavement, as much for Muslims as for Christians. Bono, for example, found a much lower death rate for Muslims in Italy than we used for Christians in Barbary—just 5 percent. In part, this might reflect the general absence of the plague from Italy: After a few massive outbreaks—genuine *Konia*—in 1575-1576 and 1630-1631, the plague vanished from the peninsula, and indeed from all of Western Europe. In addition, though, Muslim slaves may have been somewhat better fed than their Christian counterparts. Certainly the records we have indicate that those who rowed in Christian ships tended to get more generous rations. Still, by all accounts Muslims slaves were treated as harshly as any Christian in Barbary, beaten on the slightest provocation and forced to carry out the filthiest and most dangerous jobs. Perhaps Muslim slaves were simply heartier than their Christian counterparts. Judging by the way that corsairs on both sides went about the business of slaving, it seems that among Christians the more demographically fragile—the very young and very old—were often enslaved, and these might have produced a higher death rate than what was evident among Muslims, where the captives tended to be men in their prime.

In any case, if Muslims were less likely to die in captivity, their bondage was apt to be long, because they were also much less able to gain their freedom. There is little sign of organized, state-run ransoming efforts run by the Turkish Empire or its regencies. Private individuals funded charitable foundations, or *awqāf,* to ransom their fellow Muslims, but such efforts were necessarily meager when compared to the well-oiled machines of the Christian redemptive orders. Except

during prisoner-of-war trades, Muslim slaves tended to be redeemed by the handful instead of by the hundreds. It was no help that Turks were especially prized as galley oarsmen, such that European captains were usually loath to sell them back, or even admit they had them on board. Nevertheless, those in Turkish lands were far from indifferent about their enslaved kinfolk, going to great lengths to raise funds and make the necessary contacts in Christendom. Even in Malta, supposedly the dogged enemy of all things Islamic, the notarial records are full of contracts for Muslim slaves who arranged a ransom. Sometimes Christian masters allowed one of their slaves to return to Tunis or Cairo to raise the ransom, for themselves and on behalf of others.

Muslim slaves seem to have been especially good at escaping, despite a commonplace among Christians that Turks were servile, brutish, and too passive to plan anything so complicated. The archives tell a different story, however. Muslims regularly escaped from Malaga, Naples, and Sicily, and even from Valetta, which was essentially a fortress city. Stories abound of how such "Turks"—many were Moors, some were even renegade Christians—managed to disguise themselves and steal a boat, or how they kidnaped a local and forced him at knifepoint to steal one on their behalf. Many then braved hundreds of miles of open sea to reach freedom in Ottoman lands.

Nicolò Barbarigo, Venice's ambassador to the Porte, wrote to the Venetian Senate in 1578 about five Turks who turned up in Constantinople with such a story. Coming from Cairo, according to their leader, Iacup of Aleppo, they had been seized by the Knights of Malta and sold as slaves in Taranto, a rather out-of-the-way backwater on the heel of Italy. There they languished for four years as slaves, before finally stealing a boat and escaping, making it not to Turkish Albania as they had planned, but rather to the Venetian island of Zante (modern Zakynthos). Although the Venetians were meant to be at peace with Turkey, the Zanteans promptly enslaved them once again, Iacup claimed, supposedly because they "sought to send us for sale in France." Even worse, he went on, their captors impounded all the goods on their getaway boat, and this, he claimed was a considerable haul, which he spelled out in great detail: 1,400 silver coins; 12 muskets; sundry swords, halberds, and barrels of powder; considerable quantities of all sorts of cloth, several mattresses; many boxes of candles; a quantity of saffron; the vessel itself, with a sail and two oars.

Such at least was the story the Turks told a court in Constantinople, where they demanded not only their getaway *barchetta* and all its contents, but also a reimbursement for a Turkish notable who had kindly paid 800 Venetian *zecchini* to buy their freedom from the Zanteans. Ambassador Barbarigo, who appeared at the court to champion Venice's interests in the matter, apparently had no problem with the Turks' escape from Taranto—that city belonged to the Spanish viceroy of Naples and was no friend of the Republic. On the other hand, he completely rejected what he called the "most evident falsity ... of this most shameless lie" that the Zanteans had seized the Turks' escape ship, or, even if they had, that it had contained such vast riches. The Turkish pasha who heard their case seemed to have agreed with Barbarigo, though he apparently found the runaways' tall tales less offensive than funny. '"Oh, what roguery! This is a lie!' he said to the five, and then very reasonably pointed out, 'Why would the Venetians have sold you to a Turk [i.e., ransomed them], when they could have just taken all the goods and drowned you?"' Perhaps to mollify Barbarigo, the pasha sent the five to prison, "but later he summoned them back and threw them out with very harsh words." The generous Turk apparently never saw his 800 *zecchini* again, and the *barchetta,* if it had ever existed, remained in Zantean hands."[77]

Between escapes, redemptions, exchanges, and fresh captures, it seems clear that slaves came and went in many cities and regions of the Mediterranean, Muslim or Christian, and in substantial numbers. It is self-evident that for these areas men, women, and children must have been enslaved in the same steady stream that we have found in Barbary, and that Bono has calculated for Italy. If, for example, we assume slave attrition rates in Spain and Portugal that were similar to those Bono calculated for Italy—and the deaths from all the heavy labor required there were probably much higher—then we arrive at a slave haul into Iberia of at least 500,000 Muslims between 1500 and 1800. If we add these Turks, Moors, and Berbers to Bono's estimate for Italy, it would certainly not strain credulity to claim that Christians enslaved at least 1 million Muslims in these centuries. Nor does this take into account either the Maltese or the Western European powers—the French, English, and Dutch, all of whom took faith slaves as happily as race slaves, if they thought they could get away with it.

In the Levant the picture was similar. At any one time, there were likely to be at least 50,000 "working" slaves in the Turkish lands from Constantinople to Cairo. Not the slaves in the seraglio, the military (the janissaries), or the government, in other words—the men and women who often enjoyed considerable wealth and authority as the sultan's agents, operating as "free" in every meaningful sense of the term. Rather, we are thinking of those who—as in Barbary—labored in galleys, shipyards, construction sites, plantations, or private households. Probably only about half of these were European Christians in origin—mostly from Eastern Europe and Russia—with the rest coming from sub-Saharan Africa or the Asian steppes. Even factoring in fairly moderate rates of attrition, it would still have taken a large and steady supply of fresh captives to keep up this population of working slaves—some 5,000 to 6,000 per year in the 1500s and 1600s, perhaps half that in the 1700s. In all, 700,000 to 800,000 working slaves—and a great many more concubine trainees, eunuchs, and janissary boys taken in the *devshirme*—must have flowed into the Levantine slave households and slave pens. Such numbers would not have surprised Venice's ambassador Barbarigo, who included the following news in his dispatches for the spring of 1578:

> It is understood that the Tartars, that is those of Kaffa [in the Crimea], have caused the greatest damage in Poland, and that they have carried off an incredible quantity of people: some say as many as seventy or eighty thousand, but everyone says it was a very large number, in the 35 days that they were in that country, without ever having encountered any resistance, hence they were able to do whatever they wanted.[28]

The ambassador's claims that a great many men and women were being enslaved in these years is certainly born out when we tally up all different demographics of faith slaving, from all around the Mediterranean. Combining Christian and Muslim sides, we arrive at around 3 million enslaved between 1500 and 1800. The figure, as we have already noted, is certainly no census, though it does offer a range, an order of magnitude. To put it in context, we might compare our total composed of 1 million enslaved Muslims and 2 million Christians' with those reached, using much finer historical calibrations, for the trans-Atlantic traffic to the Americas. Over a somewhat longer span

of time (1500 to 1850), close to 800,000 Black African slaves were taken to mainland Spanish America, 400,000 to what would later become the United States, 4 million to the Caribbean, and nearly 4.5 million to Brazil and Guiana. In all, then, race slavery, those Black Africans taken to the Americas, outweighed the faith slavery that characterized the Mediterranean, but perhaps not by as much as might have been expected.

Of course, not every slave has been counted, or even considered, in this survey. The Mediterranean had a large Jewish population, for example, especially in Ottoman lands. Although Jews were not slavers, they certainly owned Christian slaves and were enslaved themselves, by both Christians and Muslims. How many Jews ended up in bondage has yet to be determined, along with the number of slaves they possessed or traded. The Orthodox Greeks played their own dual role as slaves and slavers. Christians, but also schismatics; Europeans, but subjects of the sultan, the people of the Aegean produced their own corsairs who are known to have gone in for faith slaving themselves, essentially playing all sides against the middle.

The varieties of human bondage in the Mediterranean have turned out to be daunting, and still we are not finished. What to make, for example, of a casual comment by a Portuguese traveler named Pedro Teixeira. In 1605, as he traveled through the Ionian Islands on his way from the Levant to Venice, Teixeira stopped off at Zante, where Iacup and his fellow runaways had ended up a generation earlier. While there, he admired the fecundity of the place, noting that "the produce of so little land seems past belief' and waxing enthusiastic over the Zantean raisins, wine, and olive oil. As to whose labor made all this bounty possible, Teixeira observed, without indicating any particular surprise, that:

> I saw in this Isle (of Zante] great use of negro slaves, some of whom were brought direct from Africa; but most by the English, who had got them in past years by plundering the Portuguese ships from Guynea and Angola/[7]

How could this be? The Venetians were trafficking in Black African slaves to work their island plantations? Was this the Ionian Sea or the Caribbean? And how did the British figure in this? Was it possible that 2 years before establishing their first permanent American colony

at Jamestown, and fully 14 years before they received their first African workers there from a passing Dutch ship, the English were already pirating Black slaves and selling them to the Venetians—or presumably anyone else? If so, what came from the weird attempt to turn this Greek island into the Barbados of the Mediterranean? For that matter, what happened to all these Africans, who apparently have vanished without a trace? As we look at the way slaves came and went in the Mediterranean, we are left wondering how many other odd variants on this peculiar institution have yet to be uncovered, in a world where both faith and race slavery were for centuries a regular part of ordinary life.

CHAPTER 5

OWE SPRING HIGHT IN PRATICA

The coast south of Rome is a long, straight, almost featureless beach, broken only by small streams and stands of umbrella pines. Today it is dotted with country' villas, nature reserves, and, down by Anzio, an occasional military cemetery. In the 16th century this was the sleepiest of backwaters, a place of malarial swamps, lonely cattle drovers, and scattered, shabby villages. A handful of these hamlets, no richer or poorer than the rest, made up the vicarage of Don Gianbattista Benvenuti, the local country' priest whose duties took him up and down this placid coast and to the worn Alban Hills a short ways inland. Though Don Gianbattista may have grumbled about the long hours it took to cover all the villages in his care, his seems to have been a peaceful life, unhurried and changeless over the years. At least it was until one fateful morning in the spring of 1588. As he later recalled:

> Last Saturday, seven or eight days ago, I found myself here in this castle of Pratica, where I had come ... by cart to celebrate mass, and yesterday morning, Monday the ninth of this month, at two hours before daybreak, 1 got up and sang the Ave Maria. I got up to say mass at such an early hour because 1 had to go to Albano [about 5 miles away]. Having said that office, because it was early, 1 went back to bed, and then, an hour before daybreak, I heard cries, and they were saying *Murder! Murder!,* making me think that one should use caution, such that 1 did not go outside, but 1 knelt [indoors] in prayer.[1]

His recourse to both discretion and piety may have struck Don Gianbattista as the wise response to an unknown racket coming from the

dark village. His choosing to hide in the little church of Pratica was not so smart, however. Those who were rampaging nearby were men with a special interest in churches, as it turned out. Don Gianbattista continued his story:

> Then 1 heard creaking, and loud breaking, and the sound of drums and trumpets, and I said to myself: these are Turks! I peeked through a fissure in the church wall, and I saw two or three men who were in the church, and they were smashing the altar of the Sacrament. Then they started to break the sacrament and the tabernacle in which there were three communion wafers. After that they turned to two wooden crucifixes, one in the church and the other in the vestry, and they began to beat them with their weapons, and of one they broke the arms and of the other the head, and they made a world of disrespect to them.

Though Don Gianbattista was somewhat slow to realize it, he had awoken in the middle of a slave raid. Judging by the way he dove for cover, however, he at least seems to have been aware that such things could happen. No doubt even a country vicar knew that Muslim and Christian corsairs had been looting each other's coastal villages for decades, and he probably realized that on these coasts in particular the rampaging Turks had become as familiar to the locals as the free-foraging Spanish troops or gangs of *hancliti.* If Don Gianbattista was a bit slow on the uptake, it may have been because Pratica struck him as an unlikely target for the corsairs. Despite being called Pratica di Mare, the village stood several miles from the sea (see Figure 5.1). Still, everyone knew that the slavers would willingly take a bit of a hike in the dark, if there was a nice, undefended village waiting for them.

More surprising, and what may have caught Don Gianbattista off his guard, was Pratica's peculiar location—he and most of those living there must have felt too close to Rome to be in serious danger from Muslim corsairs. The Vatican and the pope himself were barely 15 miles away, just a few hours ride on horseback. Perhaps more to the point, Pratica was less than a day's sail from Civitavecchia, home port of the papal fleet that was supposedly defending these lonely coasts. Still, Don Gianbattista and Pratica's loss may have been history's gain. Thousands of coastal villages all around the Mediterranean were sacked by corsairs, both Muslim and Christian, during the 16th and 17th centuries. By the 1580s

Figure 5.1 Center of Pratica di Mare, Italy. Photo courtesy of author.

such raids had become so common that they barely merited a word in the local news reports; only those that were exceptionally devastating or brazen seem to have gotten much attention from the authorities. It was here, sadly enough, that little Pratica came for a few hours into its own.

There was an appropriately hold corsair captain behind this bold raid—a *re'is* known as Hassan Agà. In the spring of 1588, Hassan was still just a nobody, a young Greek renegade hoping to make a name for himself among the corsairs of Algiers. Hassan Agà's name was nowhere to be found among the top *re'is* in Algiers. We know this, because that very year a Spanish cleric, a slave in Algiers, listed the city's 35 largest ships and their commanders. These *re'is* went out on the big galleys and brigantines, vessels outfitted with between 18 and 42 banks of oars. To the likes of Hassan would go much littler vessels, known as *fuste*—single-masted galleys of 14 or even 10 banks of oars. Yet though small the *fuste* were also light and quick, and Hassan had seven of them, a miniature fleet that he obviously handled with skill. Sailing from Algiers, he had stuffed his ships with as many armed men as they could carry, and with these 250 or so janissaries he made his landing on the coast of Lazio, just south from where the Tiber, having passed through Rome, reaches the sea.

Arriving on the silent shores at around midnight, Hassan Agà picked an anchorage at the mouth of a small stream. Leaving three of his *ftiste* out at sea, to patrol up and down the coast for any sign of the papal galleys, he ran the other four up on shore like the oversized canoes they basically were. With practiced ease, the soldiers got their scimitars and muskets ready and began to noiselessly jump down from the *juste* onto the wet sand.

This whole operation—the muffled oars, the gliding ships, the whispers of the disembarking janissaries—was an altogether masterful piece of skulking, but it was not completely unnoticed. A few hundred yards up the beach was a watchtower, one of hundreds that had been planted along the coasts of Spain and Italy against just such incursions. The purpose of this particular watchtower was just that—to watch. It had no artillery' and just a few swivel guns, and in the case of trouble the garrison was supposed to light a fire to spread the alarm on to towers up the coast. The tower's commander that night was a certain corporal Sebastiano, who, despite his orders, apparently decided that the shadowy movements and sounds coming from the beach called for more decisive action. He ordered his men to take a few potshots with the swivel guns, but as he was aiming one of them it blew up in his face.

Having only managed to injure himself, Sebastiano decided—and perhaps this represented a drawback in having the tower so close to Rome—that he would ride a horse into town to see his doctor. He left his second-in-command, one Paulo Gabbi, in charge. Gabbi, apparently a fisherman who worked part time in the tower for the extra income, decided that he and the other guards had carried out their duty, whatever that may have been. Rather than do anything more to attract the raiders' attention, and risk getting attacked, Gabbi elected to hunker down behind the ramparts and watch to see what might happen next.

What happened was that Hassan Agà assembled his men and left the exposed beach. Heading inland, the raiders soon found themselves on the trail leading to Practica. The corsairs probably knew beforehand that this village, a feudal holding of the Massimo family, was their target—in this largely empty countryside, there was not much else to aim for. Perhaps they were guided by a renegade from the area, or perhaps they found the place by dumb luck. When they came, though, they erupted out of the silence of night, falling on the

sleeping village like braying demons, shouting and shooting off their muskets. With a few, well-placed kicks, they broke down doors and hauled people out of their beds, shooting those who tried to run.

Before long, some of the raiders made their way to Pratica's church, which is where Don Gianbattista came into the story. The good vicar looked on in horror as they carried on in appropriately piratical fashion, pillaging and vandalizing whatever came to hand, committing "brutalities and obscene acts." After they got through with the crucifixes, the corsairs turned to the vestry, where they ripped up the holy books and smashed the furniture. What they found of value, they stole, including five silk chasubles, sundry candlesticks, and a chalice—worth, in all, around 100 scudi. For the corsairs, however, these were just so many knick-knacks. What they were really after, as soon became obvious, was Don Gianbattista himself:

> Having been spied out ... I began to fear that I would end up in their hands, so I fled from a window that was there in the walls, jumping down around twelve feet just in my nightshirt and robe. From there, entrusting myself to St. Nicholas of Tolentino, 1 then jumped over the outside wall, and when I turned to jump the wall, two Turks suddenly came up behind me and they fired two musket shots at me, but, by the Grace of God, I was not hit by them, except in the soutane. Then I realized that one of them was on me and 1 took the cap from my head and I threw it in his face. Then I jumped, and I was left with certain aches and pains.

It may seem odd—it evidently did to Don Gianbattista—that the slavers would rather kill a man than see him get away. Slaves were a valuable commodity, after all. An act of terror against a few was a tactic that could effectively cow the rest, however, and villagers suddenly rousted from sleep in the pit of the night could be reduced to abject passivity at the sight of a couple of timely executions. How the corsairs went about their bloody work was amply reported by a certain Nevico, a carter from nearby Cistema, who managed to observe the ensuing roundup from a safe spot:

> Yesterday morning, having not gotten up when the Turks came, I hid myself among certain barrels, and they did not find me, although those Turks looked everywhere and they took my wife

> and my little daughter of twenty months. Then I saw I do not know how many Turks, who were talking in our language, others saying come here, and then, after having led everybody away, they killed a certain Zittalonga: I saw him all bloody, with a shot in the leg, one in the shoulder, and another in the head, with the brains coming out. Iacomino the Baker, who I don't know what wounds he had, although he was half dead. Bastiano the coachman was also there, all cut to pieces; and there was a stranger, I didn't know his name, but he was from Camerino, and he was all stiff and cut to pieces, and a head drover, who had come from elsewhere and who likewise had been killed.

While they were rounding up their human prey, the corsairs also picked up a dozen or so donkeys to help haul off the other loot. The trip back to the beach seems to have gone off without interference or incident, and once there, "they held a party, playing trumpets and drums," dancing and drinking until the first light of day. As they celebrated, Paulo Gahbi watched them glumly from his tower. "If I had had the men," he later insisted, "I would have gone after them. If I had even had fifty well-armed men, I would have come to the aid *of* those people from Pratica, even though the Turks were around three hundred, just the ones 1 saw celebrating on the seashore." Instead, he and the rest of the garrison kept quiet, as the corsairs finally packed up and left, shoving the women and children below decks and chaining the men to the oars, to start their new lives as slave *galeotti.*

After the fact, the authorities in Rome sent down investigators to find out what had happened and how. According to the varying accounts gleaned from survivors, Hassan Agà and his corsairs captured between 100 and 150 villagers. One version had it that there were 110 victims, consisting of 21 women, 25 boys and girls (including "two little babes in swaddling"), and 64 men. A good many of these men were found to be outsiders, some coming from several hundred miles away. Many of them were presumably farm laborers, though others may have been just wandering through. Some might have been brigands, or something like it. They came from towns like Lucca, Siena, and Bologna, and their presence in the little village of Pratica di Mare was a good indication both of the pervasive waywardness of Mediterranean society in these days and of the risks that went along with the vagabond life.

Another list of the victims was put together a short time later by the Roman state-ransoming agency, known as Santa Maria del Gonfalone. Some of the information is the same, but here the emphasis was more on the locals. Around half of the captives were identified as belonging to one of 16 different family groups, each group marked as "all living in Pratica." By and large, then, the victims fell either into the category of single male outsiders or of local families. Perhaps the wandering men had all been captured together in some kind of farm-workers' camp or dormitory. Perhaps each of the families was snapped up as a group, because—the cowering Nevico notwithstanding—kin looked out for kin when the slavers broke down the door.

The second list also provides some physical description of the captives. This was customary with enslaved peasants, who generally carried no written form of identification. It also underscores that the residents of Pratica were an unhealthy and decrepit lot, scarred with the injuries, malnutrition, and vitamin deficiencies that characterized country people in those days. The tallies spoke of captives:

> Thirty-five years old, fat and pale ... ten years old and half deaf... 30 years old, a thin woman of average height, with a birthmark on the breast ... 20 years old, beardless, cataracts, and full of life ... 40 years of age, little and fat ... his wife, 40 years old, big and fat ... with a bad leg ... not very' big, crippled in one arm, with a birthmark on the face ... 12-year-old boy with a big stomach ... little, with skinny legs and a ruined eye ... his wife, forty years old, thin and unhealthy ... all inhabitants of Pratica.

They may not have seemed very promising material for the slavers, but there was a market for them in Algiers, and Hassan Agà got them clear away. Word flashed—or at least galloped—up to Civitavecchia to alert the papal galleys that the corsairs had struck within the sound of the bells of Rome. Just the year before, Pope Sixtus V had ordered a new fleet built precisely to take on raiders such as these. He had requested two great and eight light galleys that could easily clear these pesky pirates out of the Tyrrhenian. There had been delays, however. The ships, though completed, needed to be outfitted and victualed, so it took more than six weeks from the raid for the fleet to weigh anchor. Then it was beset with contrary winds. Arriving off Pratica

and then sailing down to Anzio and Gaeta, the papal forces found—nothing. Hassan Agà was long gone.

Subsequently, Hassan Agà sold off his captives from Pratica in the great Algiers slave market, the *badestan.* Despite the best efforts of the Gonfalonc—which was still quite new at this business—no one from Pratica was ever ransomed. The only ones who evidently ever got freed were several men found chained to the oars in a corsair galley—not one of Hassan Agà's—when it was captured by papal forces in August 1589. As to Hassan Agà, starting with this youthful triumph he went on to do quite well for himself. Sixteen years later, now a distinctly battle-scarred sea dog, the once unknown Greek renegade got himself elected the *dey,* or military ruler of Algiers.

CHAPTER 6

FEAR OF THE HORIZOH

For prowling corsairs like Hassan Agà, Pratica di Mare had little to offer in the way of traditional pirate loot. A poor dependency of an absentee landlord, Pratica was a squalid little place, where most of what was worth stealing was in the parish church. As the vicar Don Gianbattista Benvenuti recalled, those few utensils and vestments were not worth much. The wealth of towns like Pratica, and a thousand others within easy reach of the Mediterranean waters, was in their human booty. Though Hassan Agà may have been short on age and experience, he was already skilled in one of the most prized of the corsair arts—pulling as many captives as quickly as possible out of a given location, without getting lost or cut off by a mounted patrol. Like most corsair *re'is,* Hassan encouraged his men in their business by promising them a cash bounty of 10 scudi (or pieces-of-eight) for every captive they brought back to the ship. It was a good incentive and made the raiders show some individual initiative in rooting out fugitives hiding in cellars or stumbling around barefoot in the dark fields. It was also a good investment: Ten scudi paid out for a captive in Christendom would come back 10-fold or 20-fold in the in the slave markets in Algiers or Tunis.

Whatever the religious claims of the faith slavers (and many, both Christian and Muslim, loudly proclaimed their dedication to jihad), everyone knew that these raids were largely about loot. Anyone as skillful as Hassan Agà, able to haul off 100 to 150 men, women, and children from an undefended village, might realize gross sales of something like 10,000 to 30,000 scudi. Even after paying off his men and investors, settling fixed costs for the ships, and giving the local pasha

his one-eighth share, the enterprising re'*is* would still have a healthy profit for his troubles—enough to buy himself a new palace on the fashionable upper slopes of Algiers, fine clothes, and a slave retinue of his own.

In places like Algiers, Salé, or Valetta, where the rewards of corsairing drove the local economies, human beings were just one of many items brought in for sale, or resale. When local corsairs took the ships of whatever nations were the enemies of the moment, they seized along with their prize all the specie, fabrics, spices, pottery, grain, timber, or other goods they contained. When they raided on land, they pillaged churches and monasteries for plate, chalices, and vestments; villas of their tapestries, livestock, and wine; villages of their clothing, cutlery, and apparently even mattresses. All of this was hauled back to markets that dealt in each type of goods, and for the human merchandise there were other markets, equally specialized.

Though most captives passed through the same slave market in a town like Algiers (a place referred to by many as simply the *badestan,* or market), those who came to buy had different plans to use them. Some invested in European prisoners with the intent of selling them back at a (usually very high) profit. Others bought captives to put them to work, usually hard work. Slave labor turned Algiers into a "garden city," kept it bustling with the transit of goods, and built a massive harbor mole that was among the best protected on the Mediterranean. Slaves from Cornwall, Brittany, and Galicia built a palace for Moulay Ismail, sultan of Morocco, that rivaled Versailles. In the process, they helped turn the provincial town of Meknes into an imperial capital. Middle- and upper-class households throughout North Africa and the Levant—but also in the Christian Mediterranean—relied on the unpaid services of slave women to do the laundry, feed the children, and provide sex for the master. As long as Mediterranean navies were based on the rowed galley, the slave *galeotto* was a vital—and valued—cog in the military machines of both sides.

Still other shoppers bought slaves as objects of prestige. Large slave retinues brought status to their masters, especially in Muslim lands (the same function in Christendom was fulfilled by great flocks of footmen, coachmen, and lackeys). In the marketplaces of Algiers and Constantinople, buyers would fight with each other to bid for captives with special talents or beauty. Yet slaves also brought status at the opposite end

ZX

of the social scale. In Algiers, but also in Christian Valetta, very ordinary clerks, artisans, and shop keepers aspired to some day have a personal slave of their own, to help around the household, and bring that extra little touch of prestige in the eyes of the neighborhood.

Even as Mediterranean slavers made good profits, however, they also advanced the cause of jihad. Slaves that were put to work by those of one faith were a workforce that was denied to the other. Those made to labor in the mines of Asturias or the quarries outside Algiers were not available to their homelands, to man the fishing boats, harvest the orchards, or, at the most basic level, to bear and raise the next generation. Human loot, turned into the degraded object of commerce, was a superior prize even to gold and silver. Forcibly broken loose from their homelands and histories—their very "personhood," as the sociologists put it—their continued servile existence powerfully demonstrated the inferiority of their religion and nation, even while proving the superiority of their captor's force and faith. In taking slaves from one another, Christians and Muslims weakened their faith enemy, which is why we call this faith slavery. They made targets out of villages like Pratica—and like Vieste, Cirella, Policastro in Calabria, Pineda near Barcelona, Orthodox Christian Cerigo and Muslim Chios in the Aegean, Hammamet in Tunesia, and a thousand others as well—because these were exposed and vulnerable targets. There they could bleed each other of a valuable population, a great deal of honor, and some small treasure—all at relatively little risk to themselves.

Seen from a more purely economic angle, slaving in the Mediterranean was an extractive industry'. Slavers mined the coasts of Spain, Italy, and North Africa much as their slaving counterparts mined West Africa—or as the Spanish (through their slaves) mined the silver riches of Zacatecas or Potosi in the New World. They approached slave hunting in much the same spirit as those who hunted for fish or whales, for gold or guano. First they went after the sources that were the most convenient—the largest, nearest, and the least defended. There they took as much—cod or Christians—as they could lay hands on. Like fishermen, slavers might grow excessively enthusiastic at the bounties of wealth they' found in their hands, responding by loading their ships up to or even beyond the point of foundering. When the word got out of a particular stretch of coast especially rich in fishermen or peasants, other corsairs soon flocked to the same villages,

striking summer after summer, until either the local population collapsed or fled, or the authorities initiated enough defenses to make this particular area a bit less attractive.

According to archives in Sicily, Muslim corsairs, mostly Tunisians, raided the coasts of that unhappy island no fewer than 136 times between 1570 and 1606, an average of nearly four attacks a year. Presumably each attack netted at least a few dozen new slaves, though we cannot say for sure. Very few of these raids attracted the same level of bureaucratic attention as Hassan Agà's attack on Pratica, and consequently we have little idea how many Sicilians lost their freedom, or their lives, to the slavers. We know the names of some of the victims because they managed to write home, looking for ransom. Mixed in with their frightful stories and desperate appeals for help were often allusions to others, nameless fellow villagers who had been captured at the same time. One man was "taken along with five others, his fellow *pacsani,* [while digging! in the vinyards;" a woman was captured "with eighteen other people" while engaged in farm labor—all of them just a glimpse at the vast, anonymous culling that the corsairs practiced on those shores for centuries.[1]

We do know one thing about these Tunisian raiders, at least. Once their prey began to thin out on the beaches, they rapidly took to penetrating further inland. Before long, corsairs were pillaging villages far from the coast—not just in Sicily, but also in Calabria, Liguria, Malaga, and anywhere else that river valleys and farm tracks offered them easy access to the interior. At just a couple miles from the beach, Pratica di Mare was an easy stroll in the dark for the slavers of Hassan Agà. The Neapolitan archives are full of stories of agricultural laborers taken in Calabria a good 10 or even 20 miles inland, jolted out of what they had imagined was a secure sleep, "an hour before daybreak, [when] the Turks came into the farm." Further north, the records of the Republic of Lucca tell of the time in 1565 when "80 or 90 Turks" plundered inland as far as the town of Massarosa, "more than ten kilometers from where they had disembarked," and how once there:

> They went immediately to the church, such that they broke down the door and went inside, and immediately they took the ropes from the bells, so that no one could sound [the alarm]. And then they started going to the houses, such that they took, among women, men, and children, 42 in number."[2]

This kind of sweep slaving, like clear-cut lumbering or over fishing, soon showed its impact on a locale. As early as the 1580s, the Spanish friar Diegio de Haëdo concluded that a half-century of Algerian corsairing on the western Mediterranean had "ravaged and ruined Sardinia, Corsica, Sicily, Calabria, the coasts of Naples, Rome and Genoa, the Balearics, and all the coasts of Spain." Just a few decades after this slaving got underway, human habitation—much of it dating back for centuries—had begun to contract all around the Mediterranean coasts. Less viable settlements were abandoned, as anyone who had escaped the slavers moved to the larger, better defended cities. Miles of once thriving shores reverted hack to nature. The Abbé Carrè noted sweep slaving's impact on the islet of Pianosa, off the coast of Elba, when he sailed past in the spring of 1672:

> We also saw traces of wild beasts who had their lairs nearby, and came across a number of wild asses, which have bred on this island since its desertion by its former inhabitants. They abandoned the place on account of Barbary corsairs, who used to ravage the island and take as slaves anyone they found there?

By 1600, this kind of devastation marked the coasts of Italy, Spain, and Greece as well as much of North Africa. Recently, the Italian historian Mirella Mafrici, after exploring census data for the seaside villages and towns of the Kingdom of Naples (the southern third of the peninsula), charted the demographic impact of all this clear-cutting. Coastal societies throughout the region essentially collapsed in these years, Mafrici found, with towns like, for example, San Lucido in western Calabria and Vieste and Manfredonia on the Gargano, each losing between 40 percent and 80 percent of their population. In these and other towns, populations first began to decline with a corsair raid and then went rapidly downhill, either under repeated attacks or just from fear *of new* incursions. There are uncanny similarities here with the more famous demographic disaster that later enveloped West Africa once the slavers began their work there.

One difference, however, is that when the first tourists came to enjoy the Mediterranean's bracing climate in the mid- to late-19th century, they mistook the deserted—"unspoiled"—beaches and islands for some kind of Edenic paradise, rather than the bitter harvest of centuries of faith slaving. Writing in the 1880s, the Italian historian

Alberto Guglielmotti tried to warn his British, French, German (and Italian) readers what lay behind these apparently pristine coasts, by evoking the time barely a century before when:

> All ... could see with their own eyes the desolation of the Spanish, French, and Italian coasts, thanks to the pertinacious infestation of these pirates: the wretched beaches, the abandoned islands, the shacks [reduced to] ashes, the fishermen in flight, and the vessels of the Barbarian rovers loitering about on the sea.[4]

During the long gold rush of Mediterranean slaving, both Christian and Muslim corsairs were happy to pick clean the easiest slaving fields—the isolated farmsteads, the ill-defended villages, the solitary islands. No doubt, they told themselves, there were other villages up the next valley or around the next headland. The first great corsair-admirals—Capitain-Pashas of the sultans's imperial fleet, like Barbarossa, Dragut, and Uluj Alì (also known as Ochali, or "Alì the Renegade")—had enormous fleets at their command and could make themselves at home on almost any Christian shores. There, where "by imagination they Reigned Kings," they would pull their galleys on land to *"make Tent ...* that is, draw Sails over their Heads to shade themselves." Then, at their leisure they rounded up every peasant or fisherman they came across, along with all the sheep and cattle they found. The former went to the oars or were set to work cutting firewood, so that the janissaries and sailors could begin "dressing pillow [i.e., pilaf, or couscous], a chief dish and pleasing to their pallats."[5]

Before too many decades these combined Turkish-corsair fleets, sometimes fielding upwards of 100 vessels and 10,000 raiders, had devastated vast stretches of the western Mediterranean. Throughout the 1550s and 1560s, the corsairs were hauling off upwards of 5,000 to 6,000 captives at a single swoop. By the early 1600s, then, these original slaving grounds—the Mediterranean coasts from Andalusia and the Balearics on around to Sicily, including the other great islands—were no longer much worth the effort or the risk. Even as coastal defenses were improved, local populations also moved out of harm's way, and the raiders often found themselves with slim pickings. Sailing as a *galeotto* with the Algerians in the 1660s, the Frenchman Lewis Marott reported that, when his masters arrived for one of their periodic

harvests in Calabria, they were annoyed to find "there were hardly any more persons upon that Coast." In 1623, after storming into a Sardinian village only to find it abandoned, a corsair raiding party returned:

> Not having found anyone except a crippled boy. They brought him back to their galleys, where the captains mocked them a great deal about this cripple (whom they had] made prisoner. So they abandoned him on the beach, and they themselves re-embarked without having done anything more.[6]

To get more bodies and booty, the corsairs of both faiths (and those of no faith at all) eventually had to go farther afield. Partly this was connected with the pure demographics of the played-out slaving grounds and partly with the changing geopolitics of the region. By the later 1500s, the Barban' corsairs were summoned less often to support the imperial ambitions of their Ottoman overlords in the western Mediterranean and so had less need to restrict their slaving to that region. Consequently, the Tripolitans began turning their attentions towards the coasts of the Ionian Sea, while Tunisian slavers expanded into both the lower Adriatic and the Aegean. In part as a result of this strategic shift, some new slaving centers opened for business by the mid-1600s, in particular on the shores of the eastern Adriatic, where corsairs set up in places like Dulcigno (Ulcinj, in modem Montenegro), Santa Maura, and Lepanto (Lefkada and Nafpaktos, in Greece). Never real cities in their own right, these little fortified harbors served more as slaving way stations for local corsairs to bring their captives and do business with slavers from Tunis and Constantinople.

The most successful in developing new fields for slaving, however, were the Algerians. Finding the western Mediterranean increasingly picked clean and well defended, Algerian corsairs began trying to flank their Spanish adversaries as early as 1559, by slipping through the Straits of Gibraltar and cruising up the Atlantic coast of Iberia as far as the Portuguese Algarve. These early attempts were limited by the corsairs' light and open galleys, which were more suitable for coasting than for the open ocean. New shipping technology—and sometimes the ships themselves—became available to the Algerians thanks to their allies among English and Dutch privateers, with whom they fought against a common Spanish foe. The Algerians quickly mastered the

new, full-rigged sailing ships, or sailed with Protestant corsairs who already had, and were soon out into the Atlantic, equipped with far more cannon and men than their old galleys could carry.

One of the first to venture out "on an Expedition, in those Days entirely unattempted by any *Algerine;* which was to traverse the main Ocean," was the adventurous Murat Rc'is (one of several by that name), who sailed through the Straits of Gibraltar as early as 1582. By 1585, after a stopover in Salé, Murat had sufficiently mastered the Atlantic to sail three galeots and three brigantines as far as the Spanish Canaries. There he pillaged the island of Lanzarote and his men managed to haul off at least 300 inhabitants.[7]

Murat Re'is was only the beginning. Within a generation, Muslim corsairs were pillaging Galicia and the Canaries (in 1613), Madeira (1617), and the British Isles (as we have seen, repeatedly, from the 1620s until well into the 1650s). The sudden and very effective eruption into what for the Algerians had previously been unknown territory was a remarkable accomplishment, and it paid off in tens of thousands of new captives. Much of their rapid mastery' of these strange waters they no doubt owed to the flood of enterprising renegade Christians, who took up corsairing along with Islam. The temptation among historians has been to credit renegade Dutch and English *re'is for* introducing the Algerians to the Atlantic waters, though this conclusion is open to question. A well-known list of the galleys and commanders in the Algerian fleet, drawn up by the Spanish slave Diego de Haëdo in 1588, right at the outset of their incursion into the Atlantic, indicates that most of the *re'is,* 21 out of 35, were renegades, but also that the great majority of them were of Mediterranean background—six were Genoese, three were Greek, and sundry others were Venetian, Albanian, Sicilian, or Corsican. Only three—two Spaniards and a Frenchmen—could have grown up on the Atlantic.

Another possible explanation for the Algerians' success in cruising the open ocean may have been the close ties they established with the Salè rovers. Cooperation was hardly the norm between the various North African states—the Algerians and Tunisians fought endless, often very bloody wars—but for Algiers and Salé it was different. In good part this had to do with a shared heritage. Both cities had received a large share of the Moorish refugees driven out of Spain during the great expulsions of 1609-1610. The presence of these *Tagarins*

nourished in both cities a sense of common purpose plus a deep hatred for all things Spanish. As a result, their corsairs tended to behave more as confederates than as competitors. When Algiers was at peace with one of the European powers, the Salé rovers often ran Algerian banners up the mast to confuse possible prey. The Algerians, on the other hand, habitually stopped by Salé after an Atlantic run, knowing they could get a better price for their slaves and avoid having to pay their pasha back in Algiers his required one-eighth share.

Christian corsairs plundered their own share of villages, especially in North Africa, whence they took away captives by the shipload in the 16th and early 17th centuries. The Knights of Malta, based in Rhodes until they were expelled by the Turks in 1522, still maintained a certain interest in their old Aegean and Levantine hunting grounds decades later. The Knights also maintained an uneasy control over the city of Tripoli, until they were finally driven out by Dragut Re'is in 1553. Thereafter, though they kept their main base in Valetta, in Malta, their squadrons were regularly sacking and taking slaves from any poorly defended Turkish territories on the coasts of Greece, the Peloponnese, and even Anatolia itself.

Of equal stature among the Christian forces organized for combined crusading and slaving was the "Sacred Maritime Military Order of the Knights of St. Stephan.'' Founded by the Tuscan Grand Duke Cosimo I in 1562 and based in Livorno, the Knights initially focused their attentions on the western Mediterranean. In 1564, for example, they helped the Spanish in capturing the Moroccan island of Peñón de Vélez in 1564; in the 1580s, they sacked various Algerian coastal fortresses and enslaved their garrisons. By the 1600s, however, the Knights of St. Stephan, like those of Malta, had largely turned their attentions to the east, and much of the century that followed saw them in a succession of raids on Aegean islands and Anatolia. Unlike the Maltese, the Knights of St. Stephen were not specifically restrained by their charter from taking slaves among the Greek Orthodox population. Though they may have been fellow Christians, the logic went, Greeks were only schismatics, and they were Ottoman subjects as well. With so many potential slaves scattered on a myriad of largely defenseless islands, the Knights of St. Stephen needed no further excuse to shift their slaving grounds to the eastern Mediterranean. By the mid-17th century, with often indifferent and generally

rapacious Ottoman pashas providing little protection against the corsair incursions among the islands under their authority, the Aegean archipelago degenerated into a lawless and Hobbesian world. The strong, in their corsair fleets, set up themselves up with semi-permanent bases on islets with available food and water. The weak—shepherds and fishermen—did their best to hide themselves away among the less accessible coves and cliffs.

This long-term shift of corsairs away from the western Mediterranean, as the Algerians moved out into the Atlantic and of the Knights headed to the Aegean and the Levant, changed the balance of danger in the old slaving grounds. Slowly, the western Mediterranean—rich in raisins, olives, and wine—fell under the protection of the navies and the armed merchants of Britain, France, and Holland. By the later 1600s, commerce had begun to revive. Yet the gap left by the Algerians and the Knights did not go completely unfilled. A variety of cut-rate corsairs—men like Hassan Agà, those whom Fernand Braudel once termed "lesser scavengers"—soon materialized and set to work picking over what poorly defended and semi-abandoned coasts they could find. Most of these raiders and slavers were Muslims, perhaps because most of the Christians who continued to deal in slaves had by this time turned to Black Africans.

Few of these small fry could afford even a single galley—that is a lateen-rigged, rowed ship equipped with somewhere between 22 and 25 benches of oars, carrying up to 150 slave *galeotti* and about as many free soldiers. Most of these *re'is* were happy if they could finance a galeot or brigantine, miniaturized galleys of 15 to 20 benches. Along with this main vessel, a raiding party generally included a couple of smaller attack craft—felucca or *fiiste* of 5 to 10 benches apiece, each able to bring ashore a few score soldiers. Although they worked on a smaller scale than earlier corsairs, this new generation of slavers was probably about as numerous in total and apparently did as much damage. As a corsair who went along on one of these diminutive operations in 1598 put it: "We left from Biserte (the port of Tunis) and were 24 [corsairs] in a felucca of 10 benches [of oars], and we went scrounging in these villages [below Salerno] for people, money, things to eat, money [sic], and whatever we could get."[8]

With so few men at their disposal, the raiders relied on stealth above all else. They came in the night and left before dawn, such that

no one who lived in a coastal village in the Mediterranean could be sure, on going to bed, that he (or she) would not awake in the midst of being hustled away by a gang of corsairs. Such was very nearly the fate of a certain Cesare Gardone, in 1589. Gardone, captain of a coasting vessel, managed to avoid his kidnapping, but only after putting himself through a succession of escapades worthy of a 16th-century Douglas Fairbanks/ One August evening, after sailing his bark from Gaeta to Rome, Gardone decided to pass the night in the mouth of the Tiber, so he could take the tide into the city the next morning. Since this was a common practice, he had lots of company. Together with other ships, some loaded with grain, some (like his) with wine, Gardone and his men anchored under the guns of St. Michael, one of the fortresses that guarded the river at Fiumicino. Then they all turned in. The following day, wet and filthy, Gardone showed up in front of a notary, to say what had happened next:

> He [Gardone] entered into the secure part of the stream at around sundown and afterwards he set himself to go to sleep on the ship. Then, at around four hours into the night, there came two feluccas of Turks, and they put about 25 or 30 Turks ashore, and [the rest] came close with the feluccas to the ships and climbed into them, and they grabbed five men inside the grain ship, and then they entered into his [the wine] ship. Then he fled to the prow of the ship, to throw himself into the river and get away, but he found, 1 don't know how many Turks in the prow, and he could not jump. So he returned to the stem, but there a Turk said to him, "Stop, you dog, where do you think you're going?" and gave him a blow on the neck with a belaying pin. So [Gardone] after this fled up the mast, where he found no Turks, [so] he stripped off his clothes and dove into the river. Then he went to the land, but when he found himself there, he said that he found those 25 or 30 Turks, and seeing that he could not go out on land, he dove below the surface and went 20 or 25 paces upriver under water, and seeing that the Turks could not see him any more, he jumped out on land and began to flee towards the fortress, though while running there he ran into two Turks, but these got out of his way, in fear that he might be armed.

Shivering and naked, Gardone stumbled through the dark and made it to the fortress of St. Michael. At the gate, he frantically started

ringing the alarm bell, but he had to do it five times before waking up any of the soldiers inside. Finally somebody leaned over the parapet to see what the problem was, and Gardone shouted to him, "'For the love of God, save me, because the Turks are in the river, and they have taken my ship and men! Open up the door a little, because I'm naked!"' Instead, the soldier yelled at Gardone to go away; otherwise he would be shot. Faced with a trigger-happy guard and sensing the Turks behind him in the dark, Gardone decided to grope his way further upstream, until finally he came to the hut of a couple of cane cutters. After he told them his story, they found some old rags for him to wear, and together the three of them went to some other nearby huts to spread the alarm. Having heard the news, a group of these marsh dwellers gathered, and together they went off to spend the night hiding in the cane at the mouth of the Tiber.

Meanwhile, the soldiers in the fortress discussed what to make of Gardone's warning. It seems that the garrison had no real officers—their supposed captain never came to the tower and his lieutenant had decided to spend that particular night in Rome. Still, the men thought some response was called for. Finally, they rolled out their cannon and fired two warning shots into the air, followed by a third, aimed at the area where the ships were anchored. As far as the soldiers were concerned, that was the extent of their duty. Anyway, they reckoned that "if [wel had fired another shot, the Icannon] wheels, which are all broken, would have fallen to the ground." It was not much effort, but it was surprisingly effective. Seeking only to go about their slave-taking as quietly as possible, the corsairs, believing they had been discovered, quickly melted away.

They did not leave empty-handed, however. When Gardone made it to his hark the next morning, he found that "everything had been ransacked, and nothing remained there except the barrels of wine." The raiders had made off with three of Gardone's crew who had been slow in responding, and they had raised anchor and sailed away with an entire grain boat anchored nearby, taking with them its crew of six. Their net haul, according to the notary's records, was one ship loaded with grain, the removable contents of another ship, and nine men, whose slave value was probably almost that of ship and goods together.

Gardone's testimony sounds rather peevish, and probably not just because he had spent the night skulking through the mud of a

mosquito-infested canebrake. Perhaps his bad temper came from the doubts expressed by his interviewers that these were really corsairs—could infidels really have snuck so close to the heart of Rome? Perhaps they were just common port thieves, of the Christian sort? Indeed not, Gardone tartly replied: "He knew those who were robbing him were Turks, by their talk, their clothes, and their way of behaving, and they could not have been other than Turks." Though these may have been the sort of raiders whom Braudel would later term "humble men with humble ambitions," they obviously knew what they were doing. Thanks to the lax Christian defenses, they came close to pulling off an even bigger coup than they did, as Gardone pointedly insisted in his testimony:

> For {thanks to] my ringing of the bell and my calling of the people in those huts, I preserved a lot of people who did not end up in the hands of the Turks, because otherwise those Turks would have taken as prey more that sixty Christians ... because if the Tower of St. Michael had responded in time, the Turks would not have made the prey that they made, because they would not have felt confident about coming inside the river.

Downsized raids, like this little attack on Fiumicino, may have represented the corsairs' sensible response to slowly improving Christian defenses—the fortress of St. Michael obviously offered little enough protection, but it could at least raise the alarm. By the mid-16th century, authorities in Spain, Spanish Italy, the Papal States, Tuscany, and Genoa began a building campaign to defend their coasts. It was a strategy based on the watchtower, built at intervals along the coasts, in numbers that could be enormous—the Spaniards in Italy put up more than 500 towers around the southern half of the peninsula and on the major Italian islands (see Figure 6.1). At least 137 were erected just on Sicily, which worked out to about one tower every 5 or 6 miles. The Spanish also fortified both their mainland coasts and the Balearic Islands, where, it was said, "they keep [watch towers] upon the Sea-Coasts to give the Countrey timely notice of any pickaroons that come ashore to Rob and Spoyl."

Some of these towers were equipped with firearms, though these were rarely of sufficient caliber to prevent an enemy landing or to even defend the soldiers themselves against a concerted attack. Instead, as Thomas Dallam observed when he saw the system at work

Figure 6.1 Watchtower in Pulgia, Italy. Photo courtesy of author.

in Sicily, the intention was "to make lightes at the topp of theire tours, to shew unto other watche toures how many ships they saw that weare not their frends." Such warnings, passed in a timely fashion from tower to tower along the coast, could eventually reach and mobilize the local cavalry troop, potentially cutting the raiders off from their line of retreat and waiting ships.[10]

This at least was the theory, and the corsairs acted as if they believed it, since they often tried to attack and destroy any towers they came across, partly to enslave the garrison, and partly to take out an annoying menace. The English slave Francis Knight, rowing with the Algerian corsairs in 1637, wrote of their "taking many Towers upon . . . [the] Hands of *Sardena,* and *Corcica,"* and how sometimes, if they had enough time, the raiders would blow up the offending structures. Often the corsairs need not have worried, however. Like many public works projects of the Early Modem era, the watchtowers turned out to be easier to plan and even to build than to actually maintain. Almost as soon

as they were constructed, many of them ended up neglected, undermanned, and even falling apart. In Calabria, the target of constant Tunisian raids, much of the network was said to be "nonexistent, either because it was in ruins, since it was abandoned immediately [after building], or for the lack of upkeep."[11] As the tower supposedly guarding Pratica di Mare made clear, most of the garrisons were at best amateurs, at worst not even there.

Still, it made sense for the corsairs to avoid the attention of these guards as much as possible, and by the 1590s, operating as they were with smaller galleys and fewer men, the slavers had largely abandoned their old techniques of full-scale onslaught in broad daylight. Rather, they perfected the art of coming to shore in two or three light vessels with black or dark crimson sails under a moonless sky, oars muffled and slave oarsmen gagged with lumps of cork, 100 or more soldiers gliding onto the shore. Armed to the teeth with scimitars and muskets, they dropped onto the silent sands and, guided through the dark by a helpful renegade or captive, they knew where to find that particular town gate which, for convenience sake and "by old habit was left without defense, without lights, and without a guard." In an instant they were in the village, in the houses, and then in the bedrooms of the half-asleep villagers, "peaceful and still naked in their beds." The first shouts: someone tries to ring the tocsin at the little church steeple, but the raiders have "removefd] the ropes from the [church] bells, so they could not be sounded." Then other shots explode, some very close at hand, and the screaming starts, the braying of terrified animals, and guttural yells, as the darkness gives way before the growing flicker of fire. A voice cries out, "'It s the Turks! Oh God! They have come to bring us death!'"[12]

Indeed they had: either death or slavery. Once they had gotten into the village, chaos was very much to the raiders' advantage. Shocked awake, villagers tended to run about in aimless panic, freeze where they were, or bolt off into the night. Overcome with fear—often stunned at the sight of one or two exemplary killings—they did not put up much resistance, as the corsairs grabbed everyone in sight and thrust them into some convenient barn or church for safe keeping. As Curthio Mattei, the poet who sang of the destruction of Sperlonga in 1623 put it.

> Blessed was he who could flee his bed,
> That there was no other safety or shelter

> Than to run away leaving all his goods ...
> The mother abandoned her own child,
> The husband his wife, the son his father,
> Never asking advice from anyone,
> But, by back roads, indirect and little-known,
> Everyone tried to flee the danger.[13]

Stealth and surprise were a fatal and effective combination. Already by the later 16th century the night raid had worked its way into the Spanish and Italian coastal cultures—and presumably North African as well—fixing villagers with the notion that no one living within sight of the sea was ever really safe. Modern scholars write of how a pervasive "fear of the horizon" took root among those coastal people, who were never able to fully relax, knowing that mysterious and threatening sails might materialize at any time, bringing violence, death, and enslavement.

Slave raids in the Mediterranean differed in one crucial respect from those that targeted villages in West Africa. Frightened of the fever-ridden shores of Dahomey or Benin and helpless in the dense African interior, European slavers relied on African agents and allies when it came to the messy and dangerous business of actually catching slaves. Safe on their ships, anchored off the Slave Coast, they could simply wait for the barracoons to fill up with fresh captives brought from the interior for their selection. By contrast, Muslim and Christian corsairs expected to capture their slaves themselves, and by all accounts they enjoyed the hunt, even when it took them 10 or 20 miles inland. They did sometimes have help, however. Quite often one of their slave oarsmen or sailors who knew the target area was willing to act as their guide. Some, it seems, would even lead the raiders into their own village or point out how to get in, in exchange for freedom, or at least some improvement in status. Many a Christian, it turned out, was "desirous of Liberty upon any Terms," even if it meant setting their relatives and neighbors up for capture. Contemporaries like the English slave Francis Knight lamented:

> How voluntary [i.e., willing] Christians are to discover the greatest secrets though to the mine of their owne countries ... [and how they have] Pilated the Turke to the place where they were

> borne, and beene instruments in the captivating of their owne fathers and mothers and all their Lineage, taking their part of the price for which their Parents were sold in the Market."[14]

Knight's complaint is amply supported. Joseph Morgan passed along several stories of slaves who were sick of their captivity and would do anything for freedom. He wrote, for example, of "a Captive *Corso* [that is, a Corsican, who in 1582] offered his Service to conduct ... [the corsairs] to the easy taking and plundering [of] a wealthy Town in *Corsica,* named *Monticello."* Other times, the betrayer was a fresh captive, perhaps so terrified by what was happening to him that he lost all scruples. Many men turned out to have remarkably little moral fiber when faced with the choice between their own slavery and that of their neighbors. The Portuguese slave Mascarenhas, who in the 1620s rowed as a *galeotto,* recalled:

> [Cruising near the ever-popular] mouth of the Tiber, [the corsairs] captured a frigate, whose master promised them that, in exchange for his liberty, he would betray his own village, which was very rich and which they could easily capture. They accepted, and they promised him that, if he were also willing to turn Turk, they would give him two Christians as slaves [in addition to his freedom].[15]

Having already broken with their old lives, renegade Christians were apparently more willing that simple slaves to betray their native towns. Some were even eager to do so. The stories present their treachery—so it seemed to their old neighbors—almost as a rite of passage, a way that renegades could win acceptance by proving that they knew where their loyalties lay, and that they were every bit as Turkish as their fellow Turks. Sometimes their insider knowledge led the corsairs to an unprotected village that might otherwise have been overlooked. The French slave Louis Marott described how useful such a renegade proved to be during such a raid in the mid-1670s:

> The Galleys of *Algiers* and Tunis, being ten in number, set forth and arrived together at the Coasts of *Calabria,* and by the Counsel of a Runnagate of that Countrey, they surprized by night a small Town called *Otaya,* they sacked it, and pillaged it, and made slaves of all that could not save themselves by flight. In all my life

> I never saw a like desolation; all was hailed pell mell into the Galleys. Great store of Monks and Nuns had the same treatments; even many Infants that were yet at the breast, were made Captives before they knew what Liberty was.[16]

It was one such traitorous renegade who played the key role in what was arguably the most audacious—and certainly the most notorious—of all the corsair raids of the 1600s. In 1627, a mixed fleet of galeots and xebecs from Algiers and Salé, commanded by a Dutch renegade (who had also taken the name Murat Re'is), ventured far outside the usual slaving grounds of the eastern Atlantic to strike at remote Iceland, nearly 3,000 miles from Barbary. Once arrived, the corsairs ravaged the coasts of eastern Iceland and the nearby Westmann Islands in an attack that so thoroughly traumatized the tiny population there that Icelanders are still making songs and tales (and books and films) about the event nearly 400 years later. Yet, according to Joseph Morgan, the raid would never have happened, without the encouragement of one particular renegade:

> The *Algerians* ... having for many Days cruised up and down the Ocean to no Purpose, were, half in Despair, preparing to turn their Prows homewards. An *Icelander,* on board one of the Corsairs ... who some years before had been taken ... and had turned *Turk,* proposed to his Captain, "That, if he thought fit he would conduct him to his own Country, provided he would not think the Voyage too long ... Adding, that if his Advice was followed, they could not fail of a good Number of Slaves." This, tho' a Course that no Mahometan, that ever 1 heard of, had steered either before or since, was eagerly snapped at by those hungry Sea-Rovers; and under the Conduct of that graceless Miscreant, who envied his wretched Country' People the only Happiness they enjoyed, their Liberty, they brought off upwards of 800, of both Sexes and all Ages. Thus those poor *Icelanders* ... were, thro* the Treachery of a Villain, dragged away, when they least dreamed of it, to a miserable Captivity, from which they, of all Nations, had the least Prospect of Redemption.[17]

Both Christian and Muslim corsairs were happy to use either slaves or renegades willing to betray their neighbors and kin, and though these faith traitors might not have been completely trusted by their

comrades, they could still be amply rewarded for their help. For some, this initial act of treachery was a first step in a long and successful career of corsairing, where knowledge in the ways of the enemy was as important as seamanship or ferocity. In Algiers, particularly during its Wild-West days of the 16th century', when the city and its fleet grew rapidly on a flood of immigrants, many slaves and renegades quickly worked their way up to become captains of their own ships and important men around the town. Morgan noted how so many of them became *re'is* in the 1580s that they seemed to run the Algerian fleet: "Admitting that among their Number some of them are natural *Turks, Moors,* etc., yet the main Body of them are *Renegadoes,* from every part of *Christendom:* all of whom are extremely well acquainted with the *Christian* Coasts."[18]

Among the hundreds, or probably thousands, who made new lives for themselves in Barbary', a few stand out—men or women who might have been exceptional in any society, but who found they could profit far more in a Muslim world that recognized merit and initiative than in Christian lands that were becoming increasingly sclerotic. One of these was Giovanni Dionigi Galeni, born in 1519 to a fisherman and his wife in the Calabrian village of Le Castella, in southern Italy. His father had ambitions for him to someday enter a monastery or even the priesthood, but young Giovanni proved resistant to teaching and remained "utterly illiterate." Apparently an unpleasant boy to deal with, or even be around, he was doing the only work he seemed fit for—gleaning grass and tending pigs—when, on the morning of April 29, 1536, he was captured by a slaving party sent out from the fleet of Kheir-ed-din Barbarossa. Put to the oar along with most of his fellow villagers, he was eventually taken to Constantinople and sold to a fellow Calabrese, a renegade who owned three galleys and always had a need for oarsmen. Although Giovanni turned out to be a robust *galeotto* and was soon put at the lead oar as pacesetter, he was as despised in slavery' as he had been in freedom. None of his fellow slaves wanted to sit or row with him, for reasons perhaps revealed in the Arabic nickname that everyone called him—*Farias, or* Mangy.

After about three years at the oar, Giovanni decided to convert to Islam, though for motives all his own. One story had it that he thought that taking the turban would at least give him the chance to cover up his persistent mange and head scabs. Others (Cervantes among them)

claimed that he converted so he could kill a Turk who had slapped him—the sort of vengeance that was forbidden to a Christian. Having embraced Islam, Giovanni took the rather unassuming name of Uluf Ali, or Ali the Renegade, and though he remained a *galeotto,* he made the next few voyages treated almost as a free man. From this point his life took a decided turn for the better. He killed his offending Turk in a man-to-man fight, married the daughter of his owner (presumably after curing his mange), and before long had won enough in prize money to get a galley and set himself up as a *re'is.*

After this, it seems that Ulu? Ali—or Occhali, as he was known to the Christians—could do no wrong. He captured the flagships of various Spanish grandees, making huge ransoms, and repeatedly pillaged the southern coasts of Italy, carrying off thousands of slaves. By the 1560s he had proved so successful at thrashing Christians that he was successively named pasha of Alexandria, Tripoli, and finally Algiers. Because he alone had managed to extricate himself with some honor from the Battle of Lepanto in 1571—bringing back the battle flag of the Knight Commander of Malta—Sultan Selim II appointed him as the Ottoman Chief Admiral *(Kaptan-i-Derya) of* the Mediterranean.

Despite his meteoric rise (Morgan praised him as one of history's "very few Examples of a Man's making so remarkable a Figure in the World, from Beginnings so very mean and abject"), Occhali seems to have never forgotten his origins in Le Castella. Though he sacked his native Calabria repeatedly, it was apparently less for the loot of this poor and depopulated region than with an eye towards eventually detaching it from the sovereignty of Spanish Naples altogether and bringing the peninsula under Turkish control. From time to time, wrapped in all the increasing splendor of his new Turkish titles, he would cast anchor in front of his native village and offer high-paying positions to his relatives among the local fishermen, if only they would abjure their Christianity. Some of them evidently did: Morgan noted that he "brought off some of his Relations; upon whom prevailing to change their Dress and Persuasion he treated with great Deference." When Occhali asked to meet and embrace his aging mother, however, his success finally ran out. Spurning the gifts he offered, the old woman contemptuously sent him packing, saying she would have no son who had given up his Christianity.[19]

Occhali went on to reform and rebuild the Turkish fleet after Lepanto. By the later 1570s, he had made himself the effective ruler of the vast Ottoman Empire. As the less-than-illustrative sultans Selim II ("The Sot") and Murat III passed much of their reigns in drinking and fathering children, Occhali occupied his time in conquering parts of Spanish Morocco; putting down revolts in Algiers, Syria, Constantinople, and Lebanon; and leading an attack on the Crimea. Crossing and recrossing the Mediterranean to inflict his will on the Sultan's subjects, he rarely missed a chance to pillage Christian territories in Sicily or Southern Italy, taking new slaves as he needed them to row his galleys. When he finally died in 1587, it was in a palace-villa located in a section of Constantinople that he had developed and sentimentally called New Calabria, surrounded by fountains, gardens, and hundreds of (supposedly affectionate) slaves. He was buried with great pomp in his own mosque, designed by the great architect Sinan and named after him, the Kilig Ali Pa§a Mosque in Beyoglu, across the Golden Hom. Back in Le Castella, meanwhile, his memory has also lived on. Though the Turks may have called Occhali the Sword of Islam and the Terror of the Christians, his old kin and neighbors seem to have been proud enough of their one-time pig herder to put up a statue to him in the village square.

Not all renegades were motivated by ambitions for power and wealth, however. Many of them—if we are to believe the stories—were also driven by a sharp wish for revenge. This may come as no surprise for those who, for example, went to Barbary voluntarily, looking for a new life because they were disgusted with their old existence as an indebted fisherman, landless peasant, or (for example) pig herder. In the often rigid, honor-riven, and hierarchical world of southern Europe, many a man may have been forced to leave his native village after a run-in with the local lord or some indiscrete violence over a question of honor. For some, jettisoning their religion and joining the ranks of the corsairs seems to have intensified the antagonisms they felt rather than assuaged them, such that many a renegade ended up "cursing his father that begate him, and his mother that bore him, his Country, and all his kindred."[20] At the same time, those who came to Barbary involuntarily, as slaves, may have borne grudges of their own. More than a few captives grew embittered in the belief that they had been abandoned by kin back home, interpreting the lack of replies to their letters as evidence that

their relatives would rather forget about them than raise the funds for their ransom.

In the spirit of vengeance, renegades might go well beyond merely betraying their homelands to their corsair comrades. They were often found in the lead of those who set out to bum and pillage as well as merely loot. They knew the locale, after all, and could best direct their comrades in desecrating the church, attacking the property of an old enemy, burning his house, tearing up his vines, sawing down his olive trees, and hamstringing his cattle. Of course, corsair violence, whether Christian or Muslim, went beyond simple vengeance. This was holy war, after all, and even when Christian fought Christian, or Muslim attacked Muslim, "sacking the land"—the scorched-earth approach to combat—was considered sound and standard military policy. Destruction for its own sake sent an especially strong message to faith enemies, however, righting real or imagined past wrongs, while also flaunting the superiority of one side's religion and underscoring the weakness of the opponent's. Some raiders were put in the uncomfortable position of having to choose between the destructive imperatives of jihad and the profitable pursuits of slaving. Francis Knight, a *galeotto* on several Algerian slaving expeditions, noticed the conflict that some corsairs seemed to experience, when having to choose between spreading Islam by the sword and devoting themselves purely to looting and slaving:

> The bold Turke landed on the maine [in Calabria], and set fire their houses, burnt fisher boates, passage boates, horses, and travellers provisions, without feare, baryed all the Coasts, killing beeves, and other Cattle, and setting whole fields of corne on fire and committing many other outrages, to the great damage of the country; insomuch, as it was disliked by some Turkes themselves.[21]

In another sense, though, such desecration and destruction, even in the name and spirit of jihad, provided a useful cover for the more purely venal business of looting and slaving. In raiding North Africa, the Knights of Malta and St. Stephan boasted of the mosques and *madrassas* they had pillaged, as part of their crusade against Islam even as they were also busy rounding up captives. Likewise, in Father Benvenuti's testimony we have an eyewitness account of how some of the plunderers of Pratica di Mare pulled down the two crucifixes and "began to beat them with their weapons, and of one they broke the

arms and of the other the head," while their comrades were busy with what was the principal business of the raid—catching slaves. Such outrages had the added attraction of further driving home the point—as if villagers needed convincing—that these were more demons than men, come to do the devil's own work. In his poetic recreation of the sack of Sperlonga, Curtio Mattei dedicated many stanzas to the desecrations the Tunisians carried out in the local church, lingering in almost lascivious detail over their acts of profanity—acts that they seem to have committed with much the same ritualistic devotion that Mattei spent in describing them:

> That the altar of the High and Sovereign Lord
> Should he profaned so unjustly
> And ... the outrage done to God, the offense and the damage
> The crucifixes and the images of the saints,
> Of God, of the Madonna and the Holy Sacrament
> Were mocked and pierced through with arrows
> And in a moment thrown to the ground,
> Thrown down were the altars and on the ground
> The images were skewered to the floor with daggers
> The whole place mocked and profaned
> And then, these tyrants, they set it on fire.[22]

As in so much else, renegades seem to have especially featured in these expressions of aggressive profanity. Joseph Morgan called all this "spitting upon, and otherwise reviling Images, stabbing pictures, or the like" merely a "mock-Zeal" that renegades put on, intending to demonstrate their devotion to Islam. "Not that the Generality of the *Ti tries* have one Jot the better Opinion of them on those Scores," he observed. As Morgan saw it, disciplined janissaries were supposed to indulge in such rampages only if their intended victims got away, and then they too, "enraged at the Disappointment, profaned the Altars and destroyed all the Gardens and Pleasure-Houses [i.e., summer villas] thereabouts with true *Barbarian* Fury." We might conclude, then, that it was probably fresh renegades, rather than seasoned janissaries who committed one outrage that especially upset Mattei, when they left off with their usual pillaging and:

> Dug up the bones from the tombs
> Of these poor and wretched dead

To burn them and drag them outside the walls
To make to God and to us the gravest of insults
Oh, the judgement of God!
The bones of our dead are not secure underground
That dozens of years after death
They could still be the prey of these impious Tyrants![23]

Though corsairs might spend considerable time in desecration and destruction, for the sake of their own safety most of them tried to stick to the business at hand. Successful raiders were those who got in and out quickly, sometimes leaving wealth unpillaged or slaves uncaptured, if it meant they could move more quickly and remain free to raid another day. Survivors told of how the corsairs grabbed everything and everyone they could lay hands on, "and in a flash, back aboard their galleys, they set their course and vanished."[24]

This was not always the end of their visit, however. Sometimes, after several days lurking over the horizon, or raiding further down the coast, the slavers came back to the shores they had just pillaged. There, just beyond reach of any coastal artillery, they dropped anchor and sent up the white flag of parley. Their intent was to see "if any[one] of the neighbouring places would come to redeem any one, according to the custom." This was, in the shared understanding of the Mediterranean, the gray period, a window of opportunity that opened after at least some raids, when those who had been captured were treated less as slaves than as kidnap victims who could be ransomed by their relatives. As captives, they had not yet been sold in a slave market in Barbary or Malta, nor had they consequently entered into the control of one of those slaving powers. As such they were, in a sense, still off the books, and, therefore, available for purchase at what might be considered wholesale rates. This chance to strike a bargain was fleeting, however. The corsairs were willing to unload their prisoners at a steep discount, but only as long as they were paid in cash and quickly—Louis Marott said they would tarry "for almost the space of a day." Any more than that would be too risky, and after the set time, the slavers, and the opportunity, would be gone.[25]

During the brief time available, the raiders, as Francis Knight put it, "gave *Scala Franca"*—a free pass—to those ashore, who could come

aboard to "visit their forlorne friends, and the unhappy men [the captives] [were] made spectators of that place where they received their disaster." Once on board, the free could examine those in chains, hear their pleas, and try to bargain with their captors. Naturally, there was a good deal of distrust and uncertainty on both sides. The relatives feared that corsairs might have invited them on board only to enslave them, too. To assuage their fears, many preferred "to do things the way they do in Elba" (where such buy-backs were obviously common), meaning the corsairs would send a couple of their own ashore to act as reciprocal hostages in Christian hands. This the corsairs might agree to, though they too were extremely edgy, always fearing the arrival of Christian warships that could box them in against the shore.[26]

Their nervousness was not helped when the villagers sought more time. How were they to come up with so much cash so quickly? Even at a 60 percent or 70 percent discount, the prices the corsairs demanded were still beyond the reach of most peasants and fishermen, who spent their lives in what was essentially a cash-free existence. These men and women counted themselves lucky if they ended the harvest or fishing season out of debt—savings were virtually unknown and even saleable property was scarce. Then there was the question of manners. Already feeling rather helpless by having had to entrust themselves into the hands of slavers and cutthroats, the ransomers were not much assuaged by the leering contempt that greeted them when they came on board. Though some *re'is* might conduct this business "with sincerity and correctness," others were brusque and surly, making a show of threatening and abusing their captives, the better to get the ransoms flowing. With the tension already in the air heightened still further by difficulties in communicating—often nobody spoke the same language—it is no surprise that things could go wrong.

So it happened in 1587, when some corsairs showed up off the Italian coast at Fiumicino offering a double deal—a load of captives just taken in a shore raid plus a merchant ship they had seized in the process. Discount ransoms would be accepted. They played by the "Elba rules," sending two of their own ashore as hostages for the various free Christians who came on board their galeot to haggle over the captives. Tensions were high on both sides. Nobody quite knew how to set aside the mutual suspicions bred in a lifetime of jihad. The Christians

were acutely aware that they were running a serious risk of enslavement simply by coming on board the galeot. The corsairs tried to show more confidence than they actually felt—they were too close to the coast and the guns of Fiumicino's coastal batteries. One of the ransomers understood a corsair to mutter how "We cannot not wait so long because we cannot trust this shore." The head negotiator for the Christians described the event:

> Drawing up in a boat, we saw that [some] one in the mast or on a yard of the galeotta noticed us and warned us that we should go to the east side, and going on that side, I began to speak with the Rays, master of the galeotta, and he did not understand, for not having the Christian language, [so] I spoke with another who said that he was a renegade Christian ... who spoke Lingua Franca ... and I said to him that if he were willing to wait until 20 hours [4 pm] that the cash would arrive, and the ransom could be made, and said renegade, having asked me what time it was, I responded telling him that it could be around 16 or 17 hours, and said renegade spoke with the Rays in Turkish, and then said to me that if the money did not come within an hour, they would set fire to the ship ... and take away the Christian [captives].

After some negotiations, the Christians finally wrested a few more hours from the *re'is.* Some of them agreed to remain with the corsairs, as counter-hostages for the two Turks waiting on land, while the rest returned to shore to try and raise the funds. As they were leaving, one of those left behind called out, '"Be careful not to fail, because we are twelve Christians here!"' He was right to be worried, because things soon went bad. A merchant ship appeared on the horizon, headed for the harbor. The *re'is* decided to give chase, though to do so he had to leave behind his prize. To keep the advantage, he took the ransomers with him, on the assumption that they would serve as hostages for the vessel. His pursuit was soon frustrated, however: The fortress fired a few warning shots and the incoming ship make an abrupt turn and beat its way to safety.

Meanwhile, things were boiling on shore. The owner of the prize the corsairs had left behind, one Battista Poloce, had been racing through the towns of Fiumicino and Ostia, "groaning and complaining that the Turks did not want to wait" as he searched for ransom funds

for his bark and "could not find a penny." When the *re'is went* after the incoming vessel, however, Poloce saw his opportunity. Quickly hiring a few layabouts to row out to where his ship had been left floating on its own, he got them to cut it loose and sail it back under the safety of the fortress' guns.

Poloce may have gotten his ship back, but in doing so he violated several hostage agreements, tacit or explicit, with predictable results. The *re'is,* no doubt feeling hoodwinked and left with neither the old prize nor the new, sailed off with both the Christians captives he had brought for sale and those who had come to save them. All of them, we may assume, ended up sold in the slave markets of Algiers or Tunis. The Italian families involved in the fiasco thus suffered twice over, having lost both the original captives and some of those who had gone to ransom them. Even Poloce did not get away scot-free—the very existence of the depositions on which this story is based is an indication that someone in the Roman state had decided to open an inquiry against him for having caused the enslavement of his fellow Christians. As to the two Turks who had been sent ashore to act as the original hostages, things turned out badly for them as well. No longer standing in surety for anyone or anything, they suddenly had no protection against capture and enslavement themselves. Soon they were disarmed and surrounded by a mob of locals. Taken in hand by the Roman authorities, they too were very probably sold into slavery. As they were marched away, one of them was overheard to be complaining to anyone who would listen that someone had stolen his musket.

CHAPTER 7

THE FAMILY LA CUEVA

To hear his side of the story, he did what he did—took all the risks, braved all the dangers—just to better himself and bring good to his family.[1] He was born a Turk, around 1600, on Turkish controlled Cyprus. Perhaps his birth name was Mustafa, though the records are fuzzy on that point. For his first 30 years, he lived in Famagusta, the old Venetian capital of the island. At some point he had gotten married and had a son, just before getting it into his head that he should convert to Christianity. For a Turk in the Islamic lands, this was both dangerous and decidedly difficult. Apostasy among Turks was punishable by death, and none of the *papas,* the local Greek Orthodox priests, would chance their own lives to help him. Still, Mustafa was determined—so much so that he decided to take off for the West, and try out the Christianity there. His wife, he would have to leave behind, for though "she wanted with the same will to come with [me]," she was pregnant, and he judged the journey too dangerous. He did, however, take his six-year-old son.

Some time in 1630, then, Mustafa and son left Famagusta. Crossing over into Christendom was a bit tricky for a Muslim, especially for one intent on abjuring his faith, and who was, presumably, traveling without a passport. It he were found out by his fellow Turks, Mustafa could expect no mercy. If the Christians took him, he and his son could quickly be bundled off and sold into slavery. Nevertheless, as he later claimed, he was determined "to come to the Holy Catholic Faith, with the spirit to return later to get [my] wife." After some wandering around, father and son managed to get to Sicily, where Mustafa made no secret of his religious ambitions. His protestations of faith

were public, and perhaps unusual enough that he caught the attention of none other than Francisco Ferdinandez La Cueva, Duke of Albuquerque and then the Spanish Viceroy of Sicily. After meeting the aspiring catechumen, the duke was sufficiently impressed that he agreed to sponsor Mustafa and son, serving as godfather at their baptismal ceremony at the cathedral of Palermo.

Necessarily the convert took a new name to signify his new status. Juan Bautista—John the Baptist—made for an appropriate Christian name, and it was customary to take the surname of one's godfather. And so, the Turk Mustafa emerged from the cathedral of Palermo as Juan Bautista La Cueva. Naturally, the freshly minted Juan Bautista also expected that his new patron would recognize their relationship with some largesse. He approached Francisco Ferdinandez for a place in the ducal household, while also seeking the necessary bond to pay for traveling to Cyprus to fetch his wife. As a benefactor, the duke proved to be somewhat elusive, however, especially after affairs of state intervened. In 1632 Albuquerque was summoned to Barcelona, to serve as President of the Council of Aragon, and he left Juan Bautista to cool his heels, "with delays for some years in the city of Palermo." In fact, it took the once-Turk 11 years before he and his son (now nearly 18-years-old) managed to obtain the duke's promissory' note, raise the cash, and finally secure the necessary license and passport to travel back to Cyprus.

Getting to his old home in Cyprus proved as tricky as leaving it. Mustafa had been a "well-known person" there, and the new Christian La Cueva now had to "employ efforts, with great risk and danger of [my] life," to avoid being denounced for apostasy. Beyond the religious risks, however, Juan Bautista discovered some unexpected and, presumably, unpleasant complications. Upon sneaking back into Famagusta, he found that, though he may have wandered like Odysseus, his wife turned out to be no Penelope. Weary of waiting, after about five years she had married another Turk, and now she was the mother of five children—four with her new husband and her child by the once-Mustafa, a girl of about 12 years old (see Figure 7.1).

Lesser men might have been broken by such setbacks, but not Juan Bautista. Perhaps he believed that his patronage relationship with the Duke of Albuquerque, however tenuous it may have been, obliged him to come back from Cyprus with a wife ready for conversion, even a wife with a different husband. Somehow—his powers of persuasion

Figure 7.1 Turkish corsair and family. Olfert Dapper, *Naukeurige Beshrvinge der Afrikaensche Gewesten* (p. 184, Amsterdam, 1676).

must have Been tremendous—Juan Bautista managed to convince the whole lot of them to convert to Christianity and return with him to Sicily. Finding a friendly Christian ship, he loaded his newly extended family on board, adding for good measure a young man who had recently gotten engaged to his daughter. Before too long, they had crossed over to the coast of Anatolia, where they found a predominantly Christian village that would give them shelter. There they had to lie low for a bit, however, since word came that Sicily was suffering "a great mortality of plague" and was temporarily off limits. Not one to let this idle time go to waste, Juan Bautista spent their stay there getting the whole family baptized—even the second husband, who was surprisingly agreeable about all this—by taking them "secretly, on separate trips, to the church of San Gregorio."

Finally, it once more seemed safe to go to Sicily. Juan Bautista booked passage for his newly Christianized family with a few Greeks, who were to carry them (and a few other Turks) in their felucca,

across the Muslim-Christian frontier to Venetian-held Zante (Zakynthos). From there, plenty of merchant ships sailed back and forth to Sicily, and it would be easy to get a passage. Such at least was the plan, but at this point Juan Bautista's admittedly rather remarkable luck ran out. First, they were forced to make harbor on the tiny island of Kastelorizo, off the Anatolian coast. There they "were discovered and imprisoned" by the Ottoman authorities, and only the timely intervention of some local Christians got them back on their felucca and out to sea. A few days later, though, while passing through the Straits of Rhodes, they were discovered and captured by a Maltese ship. This was not, as it happened, one of the large galleys of the Knights of Malta, but a not-so-formidable Maltese brigantine that had come to these waters to fish coral and maybe do a little corsairing on the side. Though they may have been amateur pirates, these Maltese still knew their business. After their single warning shot convinced the two Greeks to immediately surrender the felucca, they brought the two ships together and rushed aboard their new prize.

Once on board, the Maltese found what appeared to be 12 very enslaveable Muslims. The eight of these who made up the extended La Cueva family immediately began crying out, "Christians! Christians!" probably because, with the exception of Juan Bautista, that was the only word they knew in a western tongue. The Maltese had their doubts. Their captain, whose name was Mario, was convinced that "all of these were Turks, but they claimed to be Christians in the hope of being set free." He pointed to the evidence. The men, as well as the boys, were dressed in the Turkish fashion, with the classic half-sleeved *giubotto.* The second husband, who upon baptism had taken the name Marco, was observed "to be freshly shaved on the head." Like his three sons, he also had the top-knot *(ciuffo, mechón, or topuz)* that Turkish males typically sported. As a final proof, the Maltese grabbed Marco and lifted his *giubotto*—sure enough, he was circumcised.

This was a time when most Christians and Muslims had fairly simple and straightforward ideas about the defining features of their opponents' (or indeed their own) faith. The subtleties of these things were appropriately debated by theologians, but regular people knew how to judge by outward signs—what someone ate and when, how he dressed and arranged his hair, whether or not he was circumcised. Admittedly, on this occasion there was a bit of debate—some of the sailors

wondered whether "the dress of children in Cyprus, whether Christian or Turk, is not ... the same?" Cautious, sympathetic men might have fancied themselves faced with a dilemma: Were these innocent Christians who should be set free, or valuable Muslims, who could be sold? Captain Mario was clearly neither cautious nor sympathetic, however. His solution to this, as apparently to most problems in life, was to shout until he got his way. Soon he was yelling at the La Cueva family, "Scoundrels! Perverters of your faith! When you are in the Levant, you say you are Turks, and when you are with Christians you are Christians!" To back his argument up a bit further, he started "mistreating said Marco with a stick," and when that failed to cow the stubborn but otherwise amiable second husband, he took to beating him with the flat of his sword, saying "Pigs, you're Turks! How can you say you are Christians?"

Captain Mario was beginning to get his point across, but he had failed to reckon on Juan Bautista La Cueva. After 11 years in Sicily, Juan Bautista could certainly speak Spanish and probably Italian as well. He at least could make a clear and convincing case to the Maltese for these Muslims-tumed-Christians. He pushed his way forward and spoke up, protesting that, though bom Turk, he had been baptized in Palermo, that he had a license and passport, and that the others were his family, also Christians. Waving his papers around and insisting he be heard, Juan Bautista finally got on Captain Mario's nerves, and, taking council, the Maltese decided their best response was to do what pirates always do with inconvenient evidence—get rid of it. As quickly as he had been captured, Juan Bautista found himself cast away, as Captain Mario "left [me] on a deserted island without provisions or food."

No longer troubled by Juan Bautista and his licenses, the Maltese set their course for home. To keep his prisoners in line, Captain Mario beat them with his fists—"though this was not really mistreatment," observed one of the sailors, "since he did the same to us." When he no longer had the energy for violence, the Captain would fall to hectoring the captives, "saying, if they were Christians, they should tell him, so that he would leave them and would not bring them to Malta." In the end:

> Leading them all as captives to Malta, he had also so mistreated and terrified them that they would not say they were Christians nor another thing, such that (arriving in Malta], the poor

> wretches for their fear would not say anything at all, and they were immediately put into irons, sold as slaves, and consigned to their [new] masters.

This story pretty much ends here. Somehow Juan Bautista got off his desert island (one of the sailors downplayed his marooning, saying that it was "a transitory uninhabited island, for being close to another inhabited island")- He then made it back to Palermo, where he and his son (whose presence in all the preceding is unclear) spent the next several years showering the Tribunal of the Holy Office, the Viceroy, and rhe Admiral of Castille with petitions. They begged that someone, in Sicily or in Malta, review their case and free the newly minted La Cueva family. They bolstered their pleas were many sworn statements, obligingly provided by authoritative figures who testified to Juan Bautista's citizenship and to his religious bona fides. An official tracked down and examined the Maltese sailors, but "having committed the [human] theft and having no fear of the law," there was little he could do. Captain Mario was soon back at sea, trading and slaving.

Perhaps Juan Bautista did manage to track down and free the various members of his extended family, yet this was unlikely. Though by the 1680s the Maltese were no longer a major player in the Mediterranean—they had been reduced by the bigger European powers to preying on the small, ill-defended ships, like this little Greek felucca—still, what slaves, prizes, and loot they managed to take, they were exceptionally adept at hanging on to. Most lawsuits seeking restitution could be blocked, they found, by their multiple and sometimes conflicting legal jurisdictions that produced mountains of paperwork and long delays. Peter Earle, the great historian of the Maltese corsairs, has noted that, "As a result of such delays many litigants died litigating, or went bankrupt before successfully concluding their case."

The alternative to an expensive lawsuit was simply admit defeat and ransom the slaves back. This could prove even more expensive, however. By the mid-1600s Turkish slaves were ransoming in Malta for around 700 Spanish pieces-of-eight. Freeing his extended family would thus have cost Juan Bautista over 4,000 *reales,* which was about 10 times the sum that had taken him nearly a decade to wheedle out of the Duke of Albuquerque, so he could get to Cyprus in the first place. So, it is likely that the La Cueva family remained in bondage.

Perhaps Juan Bautista got his beloved wife out, though at the time of her capture she was already considered an "old woman," by one of the Maltese sailors. Her claim of conversion would have rung the most true, if he could have found a judge to hear it. As to her children, all five of them, they were probably fated for a life of service in various Christian households—perhaps on Malta, which "was a country permeated by slavery, [where] ... 'almost all the Maltese are served by slaves,'" or perhaps in some other Christian land. And her second husband Marco, the seemingly ever-amiable Turk? Fairly young and (obviously) virile, he was probably snapped up for a galley oarsman, either by the Maltese themselves, or hy agents shopping the slave market on behalf of the French, Spanish, or Neapolitan navies. "Experts considered the Turks ... to have no equal as rowers," noted Earle, "and it was felt essential to have at least one Moslem slave per bench." Marco, reverting to his Islamic name, would, one hopes, have accommodated to this turn of fate as readily as he appears to have accepted his brief stint as a Christian. Then he would have found a place at the oar—"The Infidel Turk, with his distinctive clothing, moustache and reputation for physical strength, [who] was," as Paul Bamford has observed, "a symbol of the old fighting galley."[2]

CHAPTER 8

ALL AGAIHST ALL

One factor that distinguished Mediterranean slaving from its African contemporary was the possibility of harvesting slaves on the high seas. Corsairs could (and frequently did) mix their land raids with piracy, pausing between their sacking of enemy coasts to pick up the odd merchant ship, when the occasion presented itself. Over the course of the 17th century, sea slaving became the preferred means for replenishing the slave markets in Algiers, Malta, and Livorno, though the slave traders in Constantinople tended to rely on the villages of Eastern Europe for their supply. Part of the reason for this transition was the improved coastal defenses in the Christian and Muslim worlds, but sea-slaving also required less in the way of resources. In this sense, such small scale piracy was ideal for the independent and entrepreneurial spirit that prevailed in the Mediterranean in the years following the withdrawal of the great imperial fleets, in a time when even a few dozen men in an oared *ftista* not much bigger than an oversized canoe could still strike it rich in the slaving business.

Ever willing to see the big picture, French historian Fernand Braudel once observed that, while certainly deplorable, the great flourishing of Mediterranean piracy, and its accompanying sea slaving, at least testified to the vitality of local commerce—no trade, no pirates, as he put it. While certainly true, the particular virulence of Mediterranean corsairing, the number and variety of both the corsairs and their victims, also says a great deal about the lawless state of the region in the 16th and 17th centuries, its social and cultural complexity, and the marginal condition to which so many of its inhabitants were eventually reduced. In this crazy-quilt of nationalities, loyalties, and identities, oftentimes

the only organizing principal was that same jihad that hoth justified the relentless engine of enslavement and determined who would or would not he its victims.

In this constantly shifting world, where lasting alliances were almost non-existent, it was at least possible to count on a few continuing animosities. The loadstone of these was the endless holy war between Madrid and Constantinople, between the Hapsburgs and the Ottomans, between Spaniard and Turk. For 200 years, with a few short breaks, the ships of the one were the fair prize of the other, with the humans on hoard—the crew, soldiery, and passengers—the fairest and most valuable prize of all. The never ending hostilities between the great powers were extended to all their colonies, protectorates, and client states as well, such that the corsairs of the Turkish viceroyalties of Algiers and Tunis were free to take the merchant cogs and fishing smacks of the Spanish viceroyalties of Naples, Sicily, or Lombardy, even as the galleys of Naples chased after the Turkish vessels that ferried pilgrims on their *hadj* from Algiers to Alexandria. Added to the mix were a score of other players, allied to a greater or lesser degree to one side or the other. The Papal galleys based in Civitavecchia and the Majorcan corsairs; the Salé rovers and the pirates of Tétouan in Morocco—these were more or less dependable supporters of Madrid and Constantinople respectively, ready to attack either corsairs or merchants of the opposing faith whenever the opportunity appeared.

Much more the proverbial loose cannon were the corsairs of St. John, based in Malta, and St. Stephen, in Livorno. These orders of neo-crusaders, driven by their own intense notions of holy war and lust for prizes, and often accompanied by even more free booting ancillary corsairs, could and frequently did attack the shipping of any nation, Muslim, Catholic, Protestant, or Orthodox. Meanwhile, the French and the Venetians, who both maintained massive war fleets precisely for combating piracy, and who were supposedly bound by non-aggression treaties from attacking Muslim shipping, were themselves often drawn into piracy and slaving, sometimes in response to corsair aggression, hut also for their own need to acquire slave *galeotti.* Finally, as we have already seen, after 1600 there entered onto this tormented playing field any number of outside powers, intent on both the profits of trade and the lure of domination. First and foremost, these included the English and the Dutch, though in later years the

Baltic Germans, the Swedes, Danes, and finally the Americans all put in an appearance. Each of these, at one time or another, was the target of corsair slavers, and many of them were not adverse to trying their hands at a little slaving themselves.

Throughout most of the 16th century, as the battle for the Mediterranean raged between empires, sea-slaving represented a profitable sideline, one indulged in by the Ottoman and Christian fleets as they maneuvered and feinted at one another, occasionally snapping up a few hapless merchant vessels in the process. With the retreat of the imperial forces to their respective corners in the later 1500s, however, a new generation of free-booting corsairs, both Christian and Muslim, emerged to pursue such piracy full time. As both testimony and cause of their great success were the enormous pirate fleets that were soon roaming the Mediterranean in search of prey. Two detailed lists of the Algerian flotilla, provided by Fra Diego Haëdo in 1588 and Giovanni Battista Salvago in 1625, make it clear how rapidly the corsairs there were moving to fill the gap left by the departing Ottoman fleet. In Haëdo's day, the Algerians boasted 35 galleys and brigantines ranging from 15 to 24 benches, "without counting numerous frigates [of ten benches or fewer]''—virtually all of them privately owned. By 1625, Salvago found the fleet had both grown and modernized, to include six large galleys, innumerable brigantines, and upwards of 100 sailing ships outfitted for corsairing. Of these, around 60 carried at least 24 guns. Tunis also had a fair-sized fleet, with six galleys, a dozen or so brigantines, and about as many large sailing ships. The Salé rovers, harbored in a river, relied on lighter-draft vessels to get over their port's protective sandbar: Still, in the 1620s they could put out some 40 ships; by 1637 the number topped 50.

On the Christian side, independent corsairs, though less common than among Muslims, still made their mark. The greatest number clustered around the Knights of Malta, who were more than willing to grant them privateering licenses. Besides the great war galleys of the Order itself—"eight of the strongest and best equipped galleys in the whole Mediterranean"—another two to three dozen corsairing ships also sailed under the Maltese flag during the 17th century. Smaller, but no less aggressive contingents were licensed by the Knights of St. Stephen in Livorno, associated with the viceroyal fleets at Naples, or harbored in long established pirate hangouts like Majorca and Sardegna.[1]

The rapid—some would say virulent—expansion the corsair fleets was intimately tied to the private and entrepreneurial nature of the business. For most of the first half of the 17th century, piracy amounted to something of a regional gold rush, and every prize brought into Algiers or Valetta groaning with slaves and loot convinced another would-be re'is to try his luck. In its heyday, corsairing could be an easy business to break into. Ships tended to be cheap and readily available, since many more were brought in as prizes than could be used by local merchants. As for getting a crew, anyone with a reputation for taking prizes could attract all the hands he needed to run the vessel and serve as soldiers, with the simple promise of a share in the hoped-for booty. Men who refused to serve on a man-of-war or merchant vessel without a hefty signing bonus would rush to enlist with a corsair who had a proven track record, accepting service on no more than "the precarious Foundation, of No *Purchase* [i.e., no prizes], No *Pay,"* as Joseph Morgan put it.[2]

Of course, the most promising of *re'is* still needed start-up capital. If someone gave or loaned him a prize ship, he still had to pay for extensive outfitting to rig it for corsairing with the necessary maneuverability and speed. Food and water were also essential expenses, even if many captains tried to ship as little of either as possible to cut down on excess weight. Stories abounded of entire crews that died of thirst when their ship was becalmed, but some *re'is* would run that risk to get the trimmed-down vessel they wanted. Another unavoidable expense—at least until well into rhe 1600s, when the transition to sail was largely complete—were the galley slaves. Only the richest of the *re'is* could boast a private stable of *galeotti* to row his ship. The others had to rent their rowers, and few slave owners were willing to hire out such a perishable commodity for such risky work without cash up front. They demanded something like 20 Spanish pieces-of-eight apiece, or "twelve Gold Ducats per Voyage, Prize or no Prize."[3] For a *re'is* seeking to outfit a large galley of 20 benches or more, this meant coming up with at least 1,200 to 1,500 ducats in cash before he could even set sail.

To realize the necessary financing, most *re'is* turned to outside investors. In towns like Algiers, Valetta, and Livorno, where almost all economic activity revolved around the *corso,* there were money men who specialized in this sort of thing. Often they bought shares in several galleys at once, to spread out the risk, expecting a return

proportionate to the size of their share in each ship. Known as armadores in Spanish, or *taifa* in Turkish and Arabic, these were, likely as not, the same men who trafficked in the loot and slaves those corsairs brought back. Essentially they made a double profit by reselling at a markup the prize goods that they received as their share of their investment. The more established *re'is* assured their profit (but also raised their risks) by supplying as much of their start-up capital as possible. An aspiring but penniless *re'is* could also get by, however, as long as he knew how to talk up his navigational skills and boldness at sea, for he could hope to find speculators who would partner with him, requiring only that he put up naval know-how as his investing share. Though he might make only a small return for risking his life, this was still the recognized way for a beginner to make his start.

In most corsairing ports there was also a place for small investors. Whereas the big financiers might buy half or quarter shares in ship, far smaller portions were available for those who had less capital to risk. Many galleys shares were offered out by the carat—one-24th of the required total—but these were often bought up, subdivided, and resold by speculators as half or quarter carats, making it possible for even the most modest spenders, with just 30 or 40 available ducats, to invest in a voyage. "Sometimes," as Peter Earle wrote of Malta, "it seems as though the whole island must have had financial interests as bondholders in the corsair voyages." Joseph Morgan noted much the same of Algiers: "Such as were desirous of trying their Fortunes with feeble Beginnings [i.e., a small investment], associated themselves with others, so that some Galeots and Brigantines had many Owners." This democratic world of low finance permeated social life in towns like Valetta and Algiers, where even the most modest of men and women followed the fortunes of "their" corsairs with passionate interest.

On the other hand, most of these investors were, as Morgan noted, "Merchants and Shop-Keepers who never used the Sea in their whole Lives." As such, few of them had any way of judging—beyond coffeehouse rumors—which among the many would-be *re'is,* strutting and boasting their skills around the harbor, were actually capable of taking a prize on the high seas, or even competently running their galley. Many of those who "ventured Part of their Substance in that *Lottery*" soon found what a tricky business it could be. Morgan observed how financing the *corso* "has brought as many to Beggary and Ruin, as it has others to

immense Opulency." The English slave William Okeley told how his owner, just such a luckless speculator, had to sell all his slaves, Okeley included, when "the last Ship he had put to Sea broke his back."[4]

According to Thomas Baker, who kept a journal from 1677—1685, while he was British consul in Tripoli, around a sixth of all those who left the port to "go out on the corso ... returned without Prize." Baker derisively singled out one particular *re'is* named Mustafa Caddi as holding something of a record for ineptness in this regard, "having already made Twelve Voyages as a man of War ... never as yet having to value himselfe on y^e^ Least Prize taken by him." When Caddi came back 5 weeks later, "from [his] thirteenth cruising Voyage without a Rag of Purchase," Baker gleefully noted that it was "As I had foretold," adding "I would to God Algier afforded noe better Sailors nor Souldiers!" A year later, Caddi seems to have found a more suitable job, for Baker recorded that he had left the *corso* and gotten himself steadier work ferrying the sultan's emissaries back and forth from Constantinople?

Mustafa Caddi may have been exceptionally unlucky, but piracy in the Mediterranean was never as easy as the parade of prizes into Valetta and Algiers could make it seem. True, a corsair galley powered by 120 to 180 slave oarsmen could overhaul and capture almost any ship, and especially the barks, pinks, and cogs that lumbered around the Mediterranean carrying the region's hulk goods. The richest vessels, however, the galleons and brigantines loaded with wealthy passengers and expensive textiles, ceramics, or bullion, were rigged with sails of increasing sophistication, allowing them to evade predatory galleys with even the slightest breeze. More heavily timbered, they could also carry' far more cannon than the light and nimble galleys. If that were not enough, merchants increasingly tended to seek protection in numbers, sailing in large convoys escorted by a warship. To tackle this ever more formidable opposition, corsairs had primarily their speed and their manpower—a large galley carried 200 or more soldiers, who served under command of their own aga. When not used for slave raids ashore, the primary function of these men was to carry enemy vessels by boarding.

The problem for the *re'is, of* course, was to get close enough to launch this small army of cutthroats, when his prey was either blasting at him with muskets and cannon or desperately trying to flee. This was somewhat easier when a ship had been shaken loose from its defensive convoys by storms or bad discipline, and corsairs were always

on the lookout to snatch up such stragglers. Even then, much depended on the winds. With even a light breeze from the proper quarter, a well-sailed ship could slip away from a rowed galley, and though a determined *re'is* might be able to run down his prize by sheer force of oar power, it was an agonizingly slow process that could take hours or even days to play out—enough to completely exhaust if not kill many of the *galeotti.* Obviously it was better for the corsairs if all chases were short, and much of their tactical playbook involved schemes to get themselves as close as possible to their victim, leaving him in a state of indecision until the last possible moment, such that when he finally chose to fight or flee, it was already too late.

Corsairs valued surprise, and they knew how to come at their victims out of fog banks or from behind islands or promontories conveniently close to trade routes. Such islands, like Giglio and Ischia on the west coast of Italy, were favorite lurking places for the Barbary corsairs, who used them for centuries. On some islets they set up semi-permanent bases, after they had chased off—or enslaved—the local inhabitants. For any Christian planning to sail from Gibraltar to, say, Genoa, Filippo Pananti advised that, "it is best not to follow the common track, as the corsairs are always lying in wait off Cape de Gatt (southern Spain], Maritimo, and San Pietro [Sardinia]." The Maltese and Livornese corsairs, on the other hand, established their own ambush zones along significant Ottoman shipping routes, at Gerba, off the southern coast of Tunisia, or among the islets that dotted the Channel of Rhodes.[6]

Coming at their victims from several directions at once, materializing out of the fog or from behind a cliff, the corsairs usually had the advantage of surprise. At the sight of so much force approaching with (for the times) such speed, some merchant captains simply surrendered. Others put up a stiff fight, however, quickly issuing muskets to their crew and sometimes the passengers, and running out whatever cannon they had. As the corsair galleys, with their hundreds of men, sought to ram or grapple-and-board their victim, a melee lasting several hours could break out. Corsairs surged over the rail of their intended prize, only to be beaten back, often several times, with cutlasses and pistols. Sometimes the ships rammed up against each other so many times that one, or even both of them sank (see Figure 8.1).

When it came to attacking ships on the high seas, where geography was no help and it was much harder to pounce on a victim by surprise,

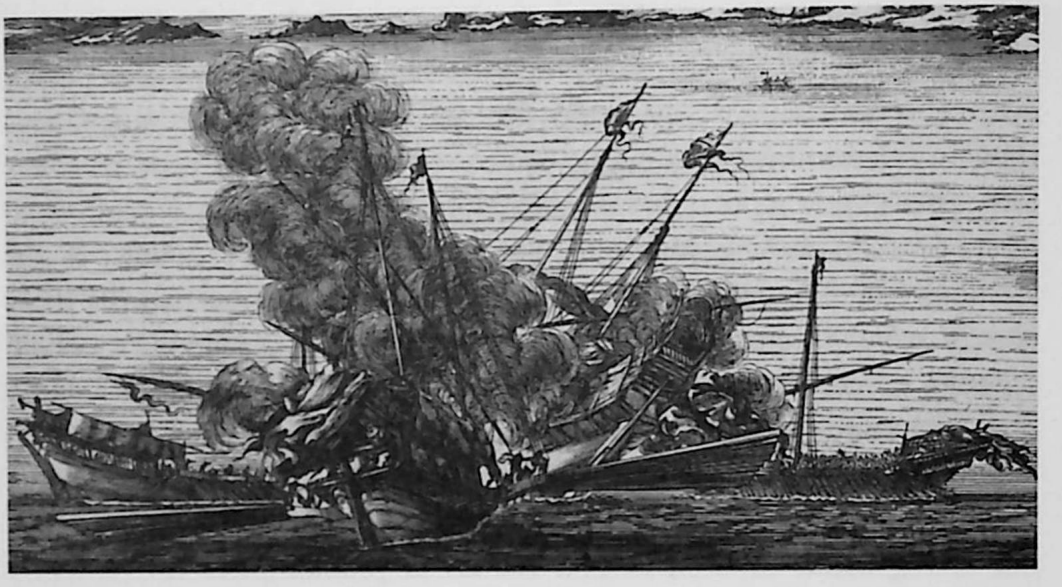


Figure 8.1 Battle between two galleys. Olfert *Dapper, Naukeurige Beshrvinge der Afrikaensche Gewesten* (Amsterdam, 1676).

deception was the key to success. As part of their standard equipment, all the *re'is* (and sometimes it seems like every ship afloat) carried on board the flags and banners of every other imaginable seafaring power. These could he run up in elaborate games of bluff and counter-bluff to lull unwary or inexperienced merchant captains into letting the corsairs get close. Pretending to be a friendly or neutral power, a *re'is* might offer to exchange news or warn that corsairs were known to be in the area; he might run up flags of distress, asking for help. Once he had gotten within hailing distance, a *re'is* turned to his collection of crewmen—usually renegades—who could speak whatever language went along with the flags he was flying. The more enterprising corsairs even kept various types of European clothing on hand, so their masquerading crewmen could dress up *alia Cristianesca,* to add a more convincing tone to the story they were hollering, as the two ships drifted a few vital yards closer together.[7] The Americans, fairly fresh to these waters in the 18th century, often fell for such ploys, though it must have required considerable naivete to get taken in by stories that were so obviously scripted by some piratical playwright. As John Foss recalled his own capture, in 1793:

> By this time we could see that she was a Brig; and discerned by the cut of her sails that she was not an English vessel, although she still had the English flag flying; we then supposed her to be a French

> Privateer, hoisting the English flag to deceive their enemy. We immediately ... hove to ... [and] when she came near enough to make us hear, she hailed us in English, asked from whence we came, and where bound ... The man who hailed us was dressed in the Christian habit, and was the only person we could yet see on her deck. By this time the Brig was under our stern; we then saw several men jump upon her poop, to haul aft the main sheer, and saw by their dress and long beards that they were Moors, or Algerines. Our feelings at this unwelcome sight are more easily imagined than described?

A *re'is* tried to tip his hand at the moment that would best scare his target into panicking and, hopefully, giving up without causing casualties or damage to the prize. Often the sudden appearance of so many armed and ruthless looking men so close at hand was enough to convince a merchant captain that resistance was useless and he might as well surrender. So it was with George Elliot's ship, approached by a strange vessel very near the spot where Foss would be captured over a century later:

> About Ten o'Clock up comes [a] Ship with *French* Colours, as soon as she came near us so that we could not Escape, she pulled down her *French* and put up *Salle* Colours, withal gave us a Gun, which obliged us to Strike. Immediately appeared upon the Pirates Deck about 200 Moors."[9]

Not all masters were as spineless as Elliot's captain, however. For those who showed some sign of resistance, or refused to let the corsairs get any closer, more duplicity was needed. Sometimes a *re'is* claimed to have heard that his intended victim was carrying contraband individuals or goods. From the 17th century onwards, merchant ships generally sailed with passports and what were known as "custom-house cocketts," or descriptions of their cargo and the duties they had paid. Corsairs, in their capacity as privateers for one or another of the endless snarl of warring powers around the Mediterranean, were within their rights to see these documents, to make sure that there were no passengers or cargo on board from a third, possibly enemy state. To do so they claimed what the Maltese called *visita*—the right to stop and inspect any non-belligerent ship, regardless of its origin.

Inspecting papers meant, of course, that corsair and merchant had to actually come in contact, a situation of exquisite danger for the intended prey. To carry out the ritual, the master of the merchant ves* sei, or his mate, could, if they were especially trusting, take the jolly boat from his ship and row over to the corsairs, papers in hand. There were obviously risks in such a move, however, as the French gentle* man Germain Mouette, sailing in a small bark from Dieppe to the West Indies in 1670, discovered for himself. After they sighted two strange sails off the Spanish coast and let them come:

> Within Cannon Shot, they bearing *Turkish* Colours, and we put* ting out ours [of France]. They ask'd who we were and when we came? and being answer'd we came from *Diep,* and were bound for America, they told us, they were *Algerines,* at Peace with us, and therefore we needed not to fear; but that our Captain must go aboard to show his Pass, and they would be satisfy'd. This [it turned out] was the method the *Salé* Men us'd to take our Ships, and the same is practic'd by the *Algerines* when we are at War with them ... our Commander, being either too credulous, or a Coward, would not lake the Advice of the Pilot and Sailors ... [who said] he had better defend himself than believe them. He caus'd the Boat to be hoisted out, and taking six of our best Men with him, left us.

That, said Mouette, was the last they saw of their captain. Now lead* erless, there was no one on board to organize passengers or crew to oppose the ship's boat, when it came rowing back, full, not of arnica* ble Algerians, but of Salé pirates—*"Mahometans* [who claimed] they would only search, to see whether we had any strangers conceal'd ... [but] as soon as the Moors came aboard, they drew the Weapons they had conceal's under their Cloaths, and fell upon all they met."[10]

Corsairs saw *visita* as their legal right, owed to them on the high seas. Any vessel that tried to escape from a search or—even worse—actually opened fire was automatically treated as a hostile ship, a fair prize, and subject to every sort of plunder. Well aware of the tactical advantages they would gain in a prize court if their prey responded too aggressively, the corsairs often did their best to provoke their intended victim into firing at them. They might roar and shout, as they did to Foss's ship, or sometimes they disguised themselves in reverse, as it

were, by running up the flag of a state with which they' knew their victims' country- was at war, to provoke at least a few musket shots.

For masters who were steady' enough not to open fire or attempt to run, and not so foolish as to leave their vessel without a command, the corsairs had another trick. Calling over the water, they asked him to let just "a few" of their number come on board his ship, to inspect his papers. This could seem innocent enough, especially if the true identity of the corsairs was still in question. Thomas Phelps, captain of a bulk-goods vessel, was subject to such blandishments from the English-speaking lackey of a corsair, who shouted across the water and:

> Who swore to me again that he was of Algiers (then at peace with England), and that I should not be wronged ... [but that] he was made acquainted by his men that they saw two Portugueses aboard my ship, and that he would have them out, and then I should be gone about my business.[11]

Once he came aboard, however, the corsair *re'is* revealed that, in fact, "he [was] a Sale man," and that, reminding the Europeans about the hostile state of affairs between Morocco and Britain, he had no compunction about impounding Phelps' ship (named, ironically, the Success). All earlier pretenses about possible "Portugueses" were forgotten, and the corsairs got down to business: "Thus we were all stripped," Phelps recalled, "and the vessel plundered in a moment."

Some intended prey were not taken in by such ploys (which must have become fairly well known, after a century or more) and tried to flee, even with the corsairs just a short distance off. Those *re'is* wealthy enough to go on the *corso* with both a galley and several small, quick *fustas* or feluccas, might then mount a pincher attack, positioning their galley downwind from the victim to block its flight, while sending the *fusta,* each loaded with 20 or 30 men, to circle in from either side. This was a hard noose to slip; unless the winds were favorable and brisk, the corsairs could probably beat their rowers hard enough to close the short distances involved. Even so, capture could take several hours, and during this lengthy and eerily silent pursuit, the passengers had nothing else to do but watch the corsairs creep closer. Faced with the reality of captivity and probable slavery as well, both passengers and crew gave in to a pervasive gloom. For the

17th-century French captive, Chastelet des Boys, watching helplessly from the stern rail, the doom positively hung in the air:

> Fright and horror reigned everywhere, and a dismal sadness disfigured our faces with pallor. The approach of enemies whose behavior, religion, language, {and) customs were contrary {to ours) was reflected in the despair displayed on our brows ... Unable to cure [ourselves] of a certain lethargic melancholy, we were incapable of giving or receiving advice: our imaginations were left stupefied by fear, to the point of persuading ourselves that, in boarding, these brutally martial people would sacrifice every one of us on the edge of their scimitars.[12]

As their fate steadily approached, old hands on the ship might whisper to the better-off passengers that it would be better to hide their wealth and disguise themselves, lest the corsairs not only rob and enslave them, but also fix an extremely high ransom on their heads. Many took this advice to heart and, like the French merchant Jean Bonnet, threw their entire sea chest overboard, "so that [the corsairs] would not so easily know who I was, thanks to the very handsome and fashionable clothes with which it was filled." Others were more selective, though as the panic spread, there was a kind of antic self-destruction about their despair:

> They threw the better part of their silver money, flashy dress suits, gilded swords, embroidered belts, boots, letters, and other indicators of wealth and quality helter-skelter into the sea, either ... [in] apprehension of being seen by the enemy as possessing such goods or out of a desire to disguise themselves, to avoid the demands of a huge ransom.[13]

As the corsairs drew close enough to board, these passengers, having jettisoned their worldly goods, switched to ploys they might have seen back home in the comic opera, borrowing clothes from each other or the crew and trying to disguise themselves as seamen, serving maids, or clerics. None of this especially fooled seasoned pirates, who had already seen it all and still had plenty of their own psychological tricks to play. One of these, described by John Foss, was clearly designed to spread terror in the hearts of men and women mincing around in their borrowed clothes:

> She [the corsair galley] then hove to under our lee, when we heard a most terrible shouting, clapping of hands, huzzaing, <Sic.—And

> saw a great number of men rise up with their heads above the gunnel, dressed in the Turkish habit like them we saw on the poop. They immediately hoisted out a large launch, and about one hundred of the pirates jumped on board, all armed: some with Scymitres and Pistols, others with pikes, spears, lances, knives, &.c.[14]

Having finally run down their quarry, the corsairs made fast with grappling hooks and came on board with a furor. Some of their bellowing and shoving was just to keep the passengers and crew thoroughly intimidated, but in a prize that had fired back or tried to flee, the corsairs were also "fired up" because custom dictated that the first man to board had his pick of one of the passengers or crew for his slave. Passengers, not surprisingly, were consequently scared half out of their wits at the sight of a mob of "Turks greedy of pillage" coming at them over the taffrail:

> It is a frightful thing to see, in what a fury they board, when they attack some vessel. They first appear on the main deck, their sleeves rolled up to the elbow, and scimitars in their hand, all making together a terrifying howl, to bring down the courage of all those who hear them.[15]

Once on board, corsairs forcefully established control: "They appear on deck in swarms," as Pananti put it, "with haggard looks, and naked scimitars." The Maltese Captain Mario who captured the La Cueva family had no compunction against beating his prisoners, and Germain Mouette reported something quite similar: "As soon as the Moors came aboard, they drew the Weapons they had conceal'd under their Cloaths, and fell upon all they met." Unnerved by the experience, Mouette fired off the pistol he was carrying, and finding that accomplished nothing, he threw it down and tried to bolt for safety. He found that his escape had been anticipated, however:

> A Devil of a *Black* ... presently seiz'd me by the Collar, and held a Battle-Axe over my Head to scare me. However, he made me understand by Signs that 1 should come to no harm, if I would be quiet and let him do his Will. Then he took all I had about me of any Value, and that done said no more to me.[16]

Even on vessels that had docilely offered themselves up for inspection, many *re'is* gave their men the right to "the *Carapartal,* or Plunder each can lay Hand on, such as all the wearing Apparel, weapons, and the like, and even frequently Parcels of Money, Jewels, &c are connived at." With 100 or more corsairs racing through a vessel and grabbing everything in sight, their looting soon went beyond all control:

> They then went below into the cabin, steerage, and ever)' place where they could get below deck, and broke open all the Trunks and Chests there were on board, and plundered all our bedding, cloathing, books, Charts, Quadrants, and every moveable article that did not consist of the Cargo or furniture. They then came on deck, like a parcel of ravenous wolves and stripped the cloaths off our back, all except a shirt and a pair of drawers (myself being left with no shirt at all).[1']

This first hour or so of pillaging, with the corsairs shoving their way into ever)' corner of the prize and shouting to the captives "in several languages, that if we did not obey their commands, they would immediately massacre us all," could he dangerous for anyone who was slow to get out of the way. Mouette wrote that, "while there was a dreadful Havock on the Deck, the Moors meeting with no Opposition, kill'd a young Hugonot, about 13 or 14 Years of Age, shooting him in the Belly." Wise captives, like the French seaman Louis Marott, soon realized that the smart thing to do was simply get out of sight:

> When I saw the fur)' of the first onset was great, and that the Turks although they were already Masters of the ship, *bastinado'd* the first Christians that they got into their hands, 1 climbed speedily up to the top of the Main Mast. 1 let half an hour pass, they not perceiving all the while that 1 was there. Seeing now that all was appeased, and that they began to think upon remedying the disorders of the ship ... so coming into their hands not till their fur)' was over, and till I had made myself known to them ... I was in a manner the only person who was exempt from their cruel treatments.[18]

Once the *re'is* had brought his men back under control—and this could take a while—he could begin the formal business of taking possession of his prize. The ship's books were brought out for inspection,

ostensibly to see if there was any contraband cargo on board. If there seemed reason to believe—or to pretend—that the vessel was carrying goods belonging to a declared enemy, this gave the *re'is* just cause to declare the ship a fair prize, allowing him to impound the ship, plus everything (and everyone) on board. If nothing obvious emerged from the manifest, all was not lost: the corsairs could always shift their attentions to the passengers and crew. Should any of them—even a single sailor—turn out to be the subject of an enemy state, the *re'is* had the excuse to haul the whole lot off to Algiers or Valetta.

At this point the interrogations began. Since many of the passengers, and not a few of the crew, were doing their best to conceal their true identities, the corsairs were willing to use whatever coercion seemed appropriate with them. Besides, there was always the possibility that some of the captives had stashed valuables on the ship or on their persons. Very quickly, as Morgan put it, "the *bastinado* begins to stir about upon the Posteriors of such as are suspected." In such circumstances, it made sense to start the questioning with the ship's master, though when the Salé rovers took the little ketch *John of London* in 1670, they also went to work on one of the passengers, George Elliott, probably because he looked respectable—in telling his story later, Elliott introduced himself as a Master of Cambridge, and his bearing may have caught their eye. He soon discovered that at such times it did not pay to stand out:

> To show us what Entertainment we are after to expect, the Master of the Vessel and myself were Stript bare and Tyed to the Mast in order to be Whip'd, all so they might extort a Confession where the Money lay hid if we had any ... (and] when they heard us complain of our condition, (they] would visit us with some Blows, insulting most intolerably over us, lifting up our dejected heads, and spitting upon our faces, not vouching us any other Name than Dogs.[19]

Most merchant captains had scant vested interest in either their passengers or their ship—the latter usually belonged to investors and was insured—but some of them still resisted this sort of abuse, perhaps out of pride or perhaps sheer stubbornness. The corsairs who captured the ship on which Chastelet des Boys was a passenger started off their interrogations by shoving the captain face down on the deck, so he

could “be cruelly beaten on the soles of the feet.” The master fairly shook with terror, as "he cried, lamented, and protested that he knew nothing useful.” Beatings and threats of more beatings were not persuasive. “He declared that there was nothing on the ship besides wheat and that he was ready to show [them] the [ship’s] register or bill-of-lading.” Furthermore, though it hardly seems likely after several weeks at sea, he insisted that “on board there were only some sailors and some passengers ... [of whom] he knew neither the destination, the profession, nor the wealth ... save that they were going to the sendee of the new king of Portugal.”[20]

The corsairs knew what to do, however. Pushing the master aside, they turned to the ship’s bosun, who had “attracted [their attention] for his circumspect timidity [and] who all trembling at the first interrogations and without waiting for others, more pressing, from Béran *re’is,* confessed everything he knew.” It turned out that the bosun knew quite a lot, including the places on the ship where money had been hidden and how before setting sail “he had seen on land [one of the passengers] dressed as a *cavalier* in cloth of silver and scarlet brocade." The corsairs quickly redirected their attentions to that unlucky man.

When it came to interrogating the passengers, a beating was not always necessary. The corsairs sometimes found it sufficient just to strip the men of their clothing (they were a bit more respectful of the women) leaving them to stand around naked or in their underclothes. It was a simple move, which could be quite effective in undermining the prisoners’ sense of themselves and their status in life. Once stripped bare, some prisoners would quickly admit who they were. When a captive proved stubborn, some of the *re’is*—like the one who captured Richard Haselton in 1582—simply accusing him of being an important merchant, cleric, or nobleman and then giving him some “strokes with a cudgell” (15 in Haselton’s case) until he admitted it. While beating a prisoner for information about himself, the corsairs might also probe him to denounce his fellow prisoners—about how wealthy they were, or their possibility of fetching a high ransom.

Torturing prisoners to get information had the drawback that victims would say almost anything to get their torment to stop. They were even more talkative when beaten to inform on someone else, to whom they very likely owed no loyalty. That those they tortured were

willing to spin all sorts of lies about their companions never seemed to bother the corsairs, who, if we are to believe some of the prisoners, positively enjoyed trapping captives into a game of identities and denials that could get positively Kafkaesque. So Jean-Baptiste Gramaye, the papal protonotary, found out when his ship was captured by the Algerians in 1619:

> They brought forth two [ships] boys, who, with blows of the whip, would swear to the falsest things, and [the corsairs] took their sayings as if they were oracles. They led me away ... and dragging me before the chief of the pirates and his Council, [the boys] claimed that I was a Spaniard [and thus an enemy]. Denying them and even affirming that I did not know a single word of that language, they then whipped me with blows of a rope to the head, swearing that they would teach it to me well. Then, hearing me speak French and seeming to willingly believe that 1 had nothing in common with Spain, they insisted that I was a Jew ... They conducted me, after an infinity of outrages, into the hold, where I was stripped of my vestments and all my silver, under the pretext that they wanted to see if 1 had ever been circumcised. All bruised from blows of fist and rope, I was ... in a pitiable state.[21]

One has to admire the sheer piratical effrontery of men who would accuse the papal protonotary, captured while dressed in his vestments, of being a Jew. For that matter, they also claimed that Gramaye's servant was a Knight of Malta in disguise. Of course, when corsairs were exercising their rights of *visità,* they came across many individuals trying to hide their identity and wealth. Throwing wild accusations at them was part of the corsair bag of tricks, like beating captives or stripping them naked. Sometimes they might strike it lucky and really find a bishop or nobleman in disguise. It was, in any case, a useful tactic to reduce someone like Gramaye, who might rally other captives with his natural sense of authority, to "a pitiable state," barely able to look out for himself any longer.

Behind all this bullying and intimidation lay the corsairs' (and everyone else's) real difficulty in knowing who anyone actually was in this world *of* divided loyalties and faiths. Until the 18th century many passengers traveled without documents, and what sailors had in the way of identification often amounted to no more than a few

grubby scraps of paper testifying to their past service. Yet the stakes were high, and time was often pressing. It was all very well to discover someone with a good family and wealthy connections, but it was still better to uncover a Spaniard, a high cleric, or (for the Maltese Captain Mario) a putative Christian who turned out to be circumcised. Any such compromised background that connected someone on the ship with a recognized enemy—through birth, employment, destination, or possessions—was enough to turn a free ship into a fair prize. Anomalous travelers abounded on the waters of the Early Modern Mediterranean; it was only a matter of figuring out who they were.

Pedro (or Pero) Teixeira was one of those travelers. We know very little about his early life, except that he was born a Jew in Lisbon around 1560 and apparently converted to Christianity, along with the rest of his family, while still a boy. This got the Teixeira family out of immediate danger from the Portuguese Inquisition, but Iberian Jews who embraced Christianity were never wholly trusted. They were known, variably and on a scale of increasing disdain, as New Christians, conversos, or *marranos* (i.e., pigs). Many were suspected of secretly practicing their original faith on the sly, even though the crime of judaizing could be punished by death at the stake or a lifetime of essential slavery' in the galleys.

A merchant's life appealed to many conversos, who were able to profit from their connections, open or clandestine, with Jewish communities in Venice, the Ottoman Empire, and (later) Amsterdam. Though he spent years traveling, there is no indication that Pedro Teixeira did so as a merchant; he did, however, possibly receive some training as a physician—a profession often associated with Jews or conversos. Perhaps the urge to travel only came over him after Spain annexed Portugal in 1580—the Spanish Inquisitors were, if possible, even more insistent than their Portuguese colleagues in rooting out even the slightest hint of judaizing.

Teixeira made his first trip to India in 1586 or 1587, and having traveled from Goa to Ceylon and Malacca, on various missions of diplomacy and exploration, he decided to make his way back home by way of the Philippines and the New World. Arriving in 1601, he only stayed in Portugal for two years before setting out for India once again, ostensibly to collect some funds that had never been sent from

Malacca. This time, Teixeira decided to return to Europe by way of Ormuz and Bagdad. In 1605, he finally arrived at the Mediterranean, which he evidently encountered for the first time in all his travels at the rather shabby little port of Alexandretta (Iskenderun), near the present day Turkish-Syrian border.

In his journal Pedro Teixeira revealed nothing about thoughts on being a Portuguese Jew who had been forced to become first a Christian and then a Spaniard. Probably he was none too enthusiastic about either conversion—we know that at the end of his life he chose to settle in Antwerp and return to living as a Jew. Yet it is also likely that his actual faith was not all that important in South Asia, where it was enough that he was a Christian, at least in the eyes of the Hindus and Buddhists he encountered. Once he returned to the Mediterranean, however, Teixeira could not have been unaware that his ambiguous status as a Portuguese converse; would again matter with those he met—so much so that both his life and his freedom could depend on the impression he made. Falling back on patterns of behavior that he had learned while still young, Teixeira adapted the automatic cautions of the converso confronting the Mediterranean.

First of all, one had to be careful to book passage on the right sort of ship. Teixeira wrote that he was happy to get himself a berth on the large Venetian transport vessel, the *Rizzarda, of over* 500 tons. There were, Teixeira admitted, more frequent French or English vessels leaving from Alexandretta, hut these he considered "less safe for passengers"—especially, he could have added, one such as himself. When masters discovered a dubious character among their passengers, one whose background might put the whole vessel at risk for seizure, they sometimes decided it was easier to simply hand him over to the corsairs, to keep from getting boarded. The Venetians, it seems, could be trusted not to sell Teixeira out like that. The French, on the other hand, might betray him to the Maltese Knights as a Jew. The English might hand him over to the Barbary corsairs as a Spaniard.

Nor did Teixeira evidently have much faith in the Turks. Generally speaking, the Jews enjoyed security in the Ottoman Empire, even if they were routinely made to feel their social and religious inferiority. Teixeira was not officially Jewish, however, but Christian and Spanish. Perhaps because he knew that many Muslims mistrusted those of unclear or shifting religious status, he tried to keep a low profile while

in Turkish lands. When the ship docked in Ottoman Cyprus, where there was a considerable Jewish community that he wished to visit, Teixeira decided it was better to be cautious:

> I held it safer to stay aboard; for Spanish subjects cannot there tmst themselves freely amongst the Turks without impudence. When they do, it is with fear, and with precaution, that they be not known and accused of some treason.

Finally, Teixeira was persuaded to make a quick visit ashore, so that he could try the food and taste "what little there was there to be had." He would do so in the company of several resident Venetians from his ship, who said they would be "looking out for me on the beach," when the time was right. As a group they went to have an informal audience with the governing pasha, who was busy inspecting his new fortifications and took no notice of Teixeira, who hung back behind his Venetians.

A few weeks later Teixeira felt a new threat, but this time it came from the opposite quarter. The *Rizzarda* had nearly made it to Rhodes when four mysterious and rather threatening galleys approached. Teixeira must have been satisfied to have thrown his lot in with the Venetians, since the captain of the *Rizzarda* promptly "cleared for action, having good guns and gunners, plenty of ammunition and firearms." Using smoke signals, the galleys declared themselves to be Maltese, but this was small comfort, either to Teixeira, who distrusted the Knights, or to the captain, who was well aware "of the unjustifiable doings of Christian ships and galleys upon Venetian vessels like ours" and suspected that "they meant mischief."

There followed a long chase pitting Venetian sails against Maltese oars. Even though the Venetians had some good winds, they never quite shook the Maltese, though they sailed through the night. Finally, the *Rizzarda* hove to, but as it happened, there was no fighting or boarding, only a peaceful exercise of *visità* by the Maltese. The Venetians offered their pursuers the modest bribe of "a not very costly present of pistachios and soap," along with the somewhat lame excuse that "they had not recognized the galleys, and had orders to trust no one, for fear of wiles and stratagems, which the Moorish and Turkish corsairs are wont to use (and that's true)." Teixeira was smart enough to keep

well out of sight while the Maltese inspectors were on board; for them his status as a converso might well have trumped that of being a Spaniard, making him a candidate for a trip to the Valetta slave market.[22]

Eventually Teixeira and the *Rizzarda* got free of the Maltese, but they had one more gauntlet to run before docking safely in Venice. Arriving at the mouth of the Adriatic, Teixeira reported that "we had word that the corsair Murat Arrays [Murat Re'is] was in the Gulf of Venice with seven galleys." This, it seems, was the same Murat Re'is who, as we have seen, once pillaged the Canary Islands and who also happened to have been lurking off the Portuguese Algarve back in 1601, when Teixeira's convoy from Havana arrived at Iberia. Teixeira recalled how on that occasion "We were becalmed, and had enough to do to look out for the corsair Murat Arrays, who came with some galliots and failed not to make prey of some folk of the fleet that tried to [leave the convoy] and go ashore in boats." Unlike the Turkish Cypriots or the Maltese, who might have been content with just enslaving Teixeira, a corsair like Murat Re'is would have gone after the entire *Rizzarda,* to impound and sell off back in Algiers with all those aboard, passengers and crew alike. The trip up the Adriatic was consequently a nervous one, not helped by contrary winds most of the way. It took the *Rizzarda* more than a month, but finally they made it, without crossing paths with Murat Re'is. Teixeira ended his account by "praising God" (not specifying whether Christian or Hebrew) "who had brought us so far in peace and in health, to whom be gratitude and glory for ever and ever. Amen!"[23]

Narrative accounts can tell us a great deal about the experience of enslavement at sea, but they are not so informative about the extent of the phenomenon. Looking at the diaries and log books of the French and British consuls in Barbary', along with the court records in Malta, we can get a sense of this, however, at least for select periods and places. The journal kept by Thomas Baker, the English consul at Tripoli in the late 17th century is especially helpful. During his stay, between mid-1679 and mid-1685, Baker kept what appear to be exhaustive records of the prizes brought in by the Tripolitan corsairs—what kind of vessels they were, their nationality, cargo, and how many passengers were enslaved or escaped. In all, he noted 71 prizes in these six years, bringing in 1,085 men, women, and children, or around 181 slaves per year. It was a modest take, but this was a small port

compared with much more active corsairing centers like Algiers, Tunis, Salé, or Malta. Only about 40 percent of the vessels brought into Tripoli actually had any slaves, mostly because, surprisingly often, "all the Christians had y^{c} witt to escape in their Boat." Whenever possible, in other words, the passengers and crew willingly abandoned ship as soon as escape looked doubtful, out-rowing the corsairs in a longboat or pinnace until they reached some friendly shores. Even then, there are stories of the corsairs chasing after them on land, but catching fleeing captives in the wild coastal brush was hard and risky work.

The 40 percent of prizes that did contain slaves tended to have quite a lot of them—on average about 30 individuals per ship. Most of these were crewmen, hut some were passengers, including soldiers in transport. According to Baker, these captives were sold in the Tripoli slave market for $200 to $300 a head, "Christians taken one with another." As such they represented a significant part of the profit the corsairs made from their work, especially on the smaller prizes, the ones laden "w^{h} come ... oyle and wine ... tymber ... beanes ... cordovans ... cotton ... potashes ... Venice Looking Glasses ... Corral ... Milstones ... Acome-shells ... Rice &.c^{a}". On such vessels, the slaves could easily be worth more than the cargo or even the ship itself, which might well be left behind, once it was stripped.[24]

Baker noted the capture of several large ships, some of them very rich with cargo, in particular (it seems), with spices, porcelain, and, especially, textiles—"Bales of Silke ... Dimety ... Scamety ... Wool ... and Cotton yarn." Many of these same vessels were equally rich in human cargo. Baker wrote, for example, of one "French Petach of 14 Guns, named the Saint Lewis ... bound from Sidon and Cyrus for Marseilles," brought into Tripoli in October, 1679 with "52 Christians, 5 of which are Priests of severall Nations, besides a Jesuit; French. The Whole valued (at] least at One hundred thousand Dollars."[25]

Such captures at sea, like the great land raids of the 1500s, were the ones that got all the attention in the European capitals and were most likely to be written up in such early newspapers as the *Mercure de France.* Their importance in the long run may have been more apparent than real, however. Just as pillaging many villagers of a few dozen inhabitants might, in the end, have brought in more slaves than a few famous raids that netted thousands, so the capture of many small

ships with just a few crew and passengers probably represented the bulk of the sea-slaving in these years. The Mediterranean was blanketed with little polacres, pinks, and barks, most of them crewed by half a dozen men—all good slaves. Fishing boats were especially tempting prey, since fishermen were forced by the nature of their work to spread out on the sea and sail slowly, hampered by their nets and lines. Over the course of the centuries, probably tens of thousands of fishermen were seized by corsairs, both Christian and Muslim, many of them actually "within sight of the harbor" or "in the face of this city." For villagers to have to stand by and watch helplessly as their kin were relentlessly swallowed up by corsairs operating in broad daylight, in plain sight of land, must have been especially disheartening.

Yet capture on the high seas could be worse. When corsairs took a fishing tartana or felucca far from land, they often contented themselves with picking up the men on board (and maybe some of the fish) and leaving the empty vessel behind. When a fisherman or sailor failed to come home one evening, no one knew his fate. Had he been sunk by a storm? Shipwrecked on a barren coast? Taken by corsairs? One never knew. "He left this city of Ascoli," neighbors said about a local sailor named Antonio Mezzaparte, "and from that time on, no one ever had any news about him" until he turned up a slave in Turkey.[26] Empty boats might be found adrift at sea and no one knew the fate of the crew, unless events played out as they once did near Gaeta, in 1697:

> [The fishermen] were enslaved on the Roman beach. I know it because 1 was in the village when they found the tartana without people [on board] ... [hut] in the tartana they found a little boy who had hidden himself and he said that everyone had been taken by the Turks ... and then also a letter came from Tunis.[27]

Though captives were humiliated and harangued, strip-searched and beaten by the corsairs who had taken them, they were technically prisoners rather than slaves. This essential change in their status did not take place until they were landed in the corsairs' home port, declared an enemy prize by the local authorities, and sold in the slave market. Out on the high seas, however, prisoners could be treated as slaves, or any way their captors liked. If the corsairs had need of *galeotti*—as they always did—they picked the fittest looking young men and sent them to the oars. On hearing his sentence, the Dutchman Jan Struys felt a

lifetime of freedom vanish before his eyes, as "they put me in a Galley, stript off my Robes, shaved my head, and set me to an Oar, which was work enough for six of us to tug at."

Those not needed or suitable for the oar—including any women and children—were instead herded off to the galley's sail locker or cable tier. "As soon as ever we came aboard," Mouette recalled, "ten of us were fetter'd in one Chain" and sent below. They were kept tied together in this way for most of the voyage home, to keep them out of the way and unable to rise in rebellion against their new masters. This was their first introduction to life as a slave, and it was not a pretty one. Galleys were designed for speed, not comfort, and the captives had to fit themselves into spaces normally devoted to holding rigging, spars, shot, or squeeze into the especially sodden and noisome room where the anchor hawser was stored. Gramaye wrote of being imprisoned in a *cubiculo obscuro,* a gloomy cell where he and his fellows were "chayned together in heaps, and thrust up like Herrings in the bottome of the ship, to be kept for the Butherie or Market." Once locked in this foetid confinement, where there might not be enough room to stand or space to move without kicking others, the new slaves were kept on near-starvation rations. Elliot reported that the Salé rovers who captured his ship sailed it away, taking all its provisions:

> Leaving (us] only a little Pork, which we soon devoured. After which, we had nothing left to maintain us in Life, save a small Quantity of dryed Olives and Bisket, which every day was allowed us. This sort of Diet did indeed bring down our high Stomachs, and made us very Tractable.[28]

Even much later, when the Mediterranean corsairs had largely given up the galley for more commodious sailing ships, the lot of a new slave was not much improved. The American John Foss had the misfortunate to have been captured by an extremely successful Algerian frigate that had "a great number of Christian captives on board." To keep his captives under control, the *re'is* decided that half of them at any given time should be locked up in the sail room. It was a daunting prospect:

> We were obliged to creep in, upon our hands and knees, and stow ourselves upon the sails, in the best manner we could. We endeavoured to get a little sleep, but could not ... for by this

> time the vermin, such as lice, bugs and fleas, had found their way to our apartment and in such Quantities that it seemed as if we were entirely covered with those unwelcomed guests. However, we passed the remainder of the night, in condoling our miserable condition, and rubbing those vermin from our bodies, in the best manner we could."[29]

The new slaves suffered not only from the sordid conditions of their captivity, but also from the length of their confinement. How long this might be depended on where they had been taken, though this was not the only factor. Okeley, who was captured in the English Channel, had to put up with another "five or six weeks" before he was finally brought to Algiers. Emmanuel d'Aranda, on the other hand, was taken near Brittany but still got to Algiers in just two weeks. The difference between the two had much to do with whether the corsairs were just at the beginning of their *corso* or near the end. Those who had taken on all the slaves and loot they could handle were more likely to head directly home. Those still searching would instead loll about rather like the White slave runners who cruised from barracoon to harracoon along the West African coast, picking up more slaves at each stop until they had stuffed their holds with enough to begin the infamous "Middle Passage." Phelps was confined in his galley for weeks after his capture, until his *re'is* had taken all the slaves and booty he could handle and finally decided to head back to Salé. Elliot recalled lying, chained in the cable tier, while his captain went hunting for more prizes: "We lay in this miserable Condition about forty days, oppressed as with many Inconveniences, so especially I remember with the stench and nastiness of our Lodging."[30] The meandering trips sometimes included stops along the way, to pick up supplies or sell off some excess slaves in places where the prices were said to be higher. Erasmo Antonio Russo, a slave from Gaeta, near Naples, recalled his galley's agonizing progress:

> We were made slaves on Monday evening and we took a great deal of time to arrive in Algiers, with a great deal of suffering, from hunger in particular and from other things, and we were forty days in a town called Bugia [Beja'ia, in eastern Algeria! with the very bad weather, and God knows in what fashion we made do to keep ourselves from dying.[31]

However long they had to spend chained together in the hold or sail locker, these Christian slaves certainly had a shorter passage on average than what was endured by Africans packed into their transport ships for the Middle Passage. That could average anywhere from one to four months, depending on both the collection time and the weather. Still, naked and chained together in the dark for hours or days at a time, these Europeans went through an experience not so different from that of their African contemporaries. Their rations of ships biscuit and some occasional olives sound, if anything, even less nourishing fare than the yams, rice, and beans generally given to African slaves. Like the Africans these captives were sometimes allowed to come out for air, though it was generally not for the sake of their health. As George Elliot recalled:

> At length, about a Month after I was taken, one Morning when there was little Wind stirring we were call'd up upon the Deck. I thought it had been to refresh Ourselves, but we found that it was weary Labour and Toil, for there being a great Calm all that Day, we were obliged to tug hard at the Oars till Ten at Night.[32]

"Pent up in [a] filthy Algerine ship, where every object combined to make us weary of life," is how Pananti recalled it. Not surprisingly, many of these new captives died, starting with those who had been wounded in the take-over of their ship. The numbers of the dead never figure into overall death rates of slaves, since their bodies were "thrown into the sea without the slightest regard," and no records were kept, unless such deaths were remembered by a fellow slave. As their unhappy voyage continued, others slaves, in their cramped *cubiculo obscuro,* began falling prey to despair, overwhelmed not only by their painful awareness of all they had lost, but also of the unknown world of suffering that awaited them. Their loss of hope no doubt differed in its specifics than what famously drove many Black Africans to suicide during the Middle Passage, but in the end its effect could be much the same, spreading almost like a virus through the prisoners. Again, it was Elliot who recorded its effects on his dismal voyage back to Sale:

> It was but a miserable comfort methought, to have such Companions in Misery, and truly the Sight of so many dejected Souls ... affected me then with more sensible Grief than my own Sufferings ... Wc

were all Lodged equally and had the same sort of Accommodations, [a] French Gentleman and the meanest of Seamen were treated alike, which subjected [the Gentleman] to such a Grief that was too powerful for him, so that at length it broke his Heart, for he died the next day after we Landed?'

CHAPTER 9

SIEUR CHASTELET DES BOYS, KHIGHT AMD WATER CARRIER

Sometime in 1641, the French nobleman René du Chastelet des Boys was on his way to take up service with France's ally Portugal, when his ship was captured by corsairs not far from Lisbon. Taken to Algiers, Chastelet was sold at the slave market, or *badestan,* a few weeks later. Blending in with the scores of slaves who were up for auction, Chastelet managed to elude the scrutiny of both the *dey of* Algiers and of Ali Pegelin, chief of the corsairs. The former was always on the lookout for wealthy captives to ransom; the latter was searching for strong, young men to row his galleys. Instead Chastelet was purchased by Khodja Ali (Chastelet called him Oge Ally), meaning "Ali the Scrivener." Which indeed he was, for Khodja Ali was the secretary of the Divan, the ruling council of Algiers. He was a wealthy and well-connected man who received a percentage of every slave sold in the *badestan.* Not surprisingly he was also an expert on slaves, or thought he was. Although he had bought Chastelet without any precise idea what the Frenchman was good for, he was pretty sure he could find out, and he started inquiring even as the two of them were walking back to his house.

"There was not a trick that he didn't try to find out if he had gotten a good deal with me," noted Chastelet, who kept insisting that he was nothing more than a simple soldier of fortune, captured on his way to take up service with the Portuguese army. The "Scrivener" knew his slaves and had his doubts, however, and once they had arrived at his house:

> He went and fetched for me an enormous arquebus, which personally I couldn't aim without [a] support, and which he himself

> loaded and presented to me, smiling, with the command to shoot. I found myself unable to move or aim it, so heavy was it [when] loaded. Then, with a mocking smile ... he asked me if very many soldiers like me were going to serve the Portuguese crown?[1]

Caught out in his little lie, Chastelet was sufficiently disconcerted that at first he assumed that his master was still joking around the next morning, when Khodja Ali announced that his new slave would start as a water carrier, giving him "two great brass pitchers that I could barely carry empty." Actually, this was fairly routine work for domestic slaves. Chastelet was to fill his vessels at the public fountain and then sell off his load hy the bowlful to passersby and at the houses of regular clients. Out of his proceeds, he was meant to pay Khodja Ali 20 aspers (less than one-half of a piece-of-eight) at the end of each day. If he failed to come up with this tithe, his master promised to give him 100 lashes.

Though he thought it was an impossible job, Chastelet was still out on the street first thing in the morning, wobbling under his giant pitchers, for "fear gives some force and wings to he who runs." Yet, though he "cried along the streets like the others, calling loudly *ab el ma—who wants my water*[1]*."* and though he stayed out late, he still only managed to bring back 12 aspers. True to his word, Khodja Ali had two of his slaves—who were English and seemed to relish the task—"turn me over with my Head down, and put my feet in a strap or invention of wood, which two others held up, during which some Turks beat on [my] feet thus passed through and attached" (see Figure 9.1).

Although promised 100 lashes, Chastelet had been given only "five or six blows" on the soles of his feet when Khodja Ali's wife came in and persuaded her husband to stop. Chastelet, she argued, was merely "an *esclave nouveau,* one who didn't know the streets of the town." He would quickly learn the ropes, she promised her husband, and—like the veterans "who have their customers and know the short cuts"—he would soon he bringing hack his 20 aspers. Somewhat grudgingly, Khodja Ali released Chastelet and sent him off for the night. Arriving hack in the slave quarters, Chastelet soon found that his "companions in misfortune," men from Portugal, the Low Countries, Sicily, Majorca, and Spain, showed him no more sympathy or spirit of

Figure 9.1 Footbeating: The *bastinato.* Emanuel D'Aranda, *The History of Algiers and its Slavery* (frontispiece, London, 1666).

solidarity than the two Englishmen who had helped Khodja Ali with his beating:

> I had only just arrived when the other slave water carriers began mocking rather than consoling me, having learned that I had not been able to make but twelve aspers, [since] they themselves were obliged to pay [Khodja Ali] twenty-four aspers every evening, and this they did easily.

That very night, Chastelet des Boys received word that his master had given up on him as a water carrier and decided that, first thing in the morning, he would be sent out to work on Khodja Ali's little farm, a scant mile west of the city. He was also told that, "if I didn't conduct myself with more fervor in the cultivation of his garden than I had in selling water, I would be sent to the galleys, where the force and agility would be found for me." Setting off after a night made sleepless by

Figure 9.2 Slaves marching off to farm work. Pierre Dan, *Historic van Barbaryen en des zelfs* Zee-Roovers (detail of frontispiece, Amsterdam, 1684).

anxiety, Chastelet got to the farm in the cool of the morning. He was handed a pick and marched out with three others to Khodja Ali's "great garden watered by a quantity of fountains" (see Figure 9.2). Chastelet admitted to spending more time looking at the farms' peculiar trees and fruits than in learning how to wield a pick. Consequently, he was embarrassed when Khodja Ali showed up for a surprise inspection in the heat of the afternoon, since "he could readily notice the pain which I took at digging and my inexperience in this trade." Chastelet worried not only that he might be sent to the galleys, but also, and perhaps much more, "I had fear that my master would suspect something of my [high] birth from my scant disposition for laboring."

Chastelet did his best out in the countryside for five or six days, but before long he was getting weaker, "so feeble that only with difficulty could I put one foot in front of the other; added to which, the heat caused me to break out in a rash all over my body, which left me incapable of doing anything except very slowly." Even worse, his fellow

slaves out on the farm were as contemptuous towards him as those in the city. They' rejected him as impossibly' feeble and complained to khodja Ali that they didn t' want to put up with my working so clumsily in the same place with them any more."

Having decided that he was fit for nothing else, Khodja Ali concluded that Chastelet's only possible use was to impregnate his Black slaves—or so the Frenchman claimed. Every so often, Chastelet wrote, the Scrivener would choose from among his male slaves one who was "the whitest and the most vigorous" for this task. Considering how decrepit his past performances were, one wonders why this particular task was given to Chastelet—presumably he was at least white enough for the job. For Khodja Ali, it was in any case simply a matter of business: Mulattos were in high demand, so it was reasonable to make as many as possible, who could then be sold, "by means of [Khodja Ali's) agents in Alexandria and Constantinople, and of this he made his principal income."

Having been given the task, Chastelet spent (another) restless night, fearful both of under-performing and of giving away his noble background, perhaps by performing too well. He need not have worried. At the first hour of light, a "great, black eunuch named Mustafa," loaded down with "some provisions and a barrel or rather long drum," came to find him. Hitting the dmm two or three times to get the little procession started, Mustafa led Chastelet des Boys to the harem—the stables, really—of the nêgrines, "continuing to beat the same rhythm on his dram along the way." Once they got to the harem, the eunuch brought Chastelet inside and introduced him to the "fifteen or sixteen" Black, female slaves there. Chastelet claimed that he was so intimidated by the atmosphere inside this "shadowy seraglio" that he tried to wriggle out, though to no avail. Mustafa, he wrote, practically "threw me onto these rather peculiar and quite diverse beings ... [and] half enraged, he cried out their names all at the same time." Leaving the provisions and a bottle of date brandy, the eunuch locked Chastelet inside and went off. The next morning he was back, however, standing guard all that day and for the next six at the door of what Chastelet called "Oge Ally's terrestrial paradise." Once he had taken up his position, Chastelet added, "he didn't fail, either the next day or those that followed, evening and morning, to play us a serenade on his lugubrious drum."

Like so much else in his picaresque tale, Chastelet's week in the Black seraglio hardly redounded to his credit. Rapidly depleted by his

new duties, he felt only dread each time Mustafa came to strong arm him back to the harem. To get out of his Herculean labors, Chastelet decided he had no choice but to fake epilepsy, in the hopes that his master would finally give up on him (perhaps as unsuitable for breeding) and sell him. Fed up with his hopeless slave, Khodja Ali still hesitated, partly because he feared he would lose money in the resale, but, more important, out of concern that having to bring Chastelet back to the public market would call into question his hard-won reputation as a shrewd trafficker in slaves. Finally the "Scrivener" hit upon the solution of fobbing off the ever-useless Chastelet in a disguise, as a captive who had just arrived in Algiers. This took some preparation, however:

> The next morning, 1 was taken to the baths [where] I was well washed, [my beard] trimmed, and [my head] shaved. Then I was taken to the second-hand clothes shop of the Jews, where they bought me the outfit of a Flemish sailor, and the following day [I was sent) to the market, where after some bids, an Arab of the place won the bidding and put me in the hands of his sister, the widow of a Flemish renegade, for whom he had bought me.

For a few weeks Chastelet des Boys served as the house slave, water carrier, and nanny for his new mistress, named Fatima, and her young child. The work was light and, by Chastelet's account, it was the most idyllic part of his slavery. Yet he was soon sold again, this time—so he claimed—because her brother thought that Fatima was finding him too attractive. As in the Americas, it was perfectly common in the Mediterranean to put slaves up for sale or resale, just as one did with animals or furniture. Even house slaves like Chastelet, presumably on good terms with his mistress, were unloaded without any particular regret, though one had to be careful about reselling a slave too often or too quickly. Not for reasons of affection, but rather to avoid having the word get around that there was something wrong with him. The rumors that swirled around the *badestan* could be fatal to a successful resale, and that was why Chastelet's third master, a Turkish *odobashi,* or corporal in the janissaries, managed to buy him for a mere 60 pieces-of-eight. As Chastelet noted:

> The cause of the good deal that [my new master] got for me was the frequent display made of my person in the Suq, [where] 1 was knocked down for modest bids that were about as much or [a bit]

> more than for the horses shown and traded at the Saint-Victor Market in Paris. The Jews and other sorts of experts found my body feeble, with more vigor in my teeth than elsewhere. One said that he had seen me taking care of the négrines at the stables of khodja Ali; another had seen me carrying water weakly and without force; still another remembered how said Khodja Ali had gotten rid of me in the public Badestan.

Chastelet des Boys got along fairly well with his *odobashi.* Janissaries had a good reputation of wanting slaves for service rather than for speculation and resale, and as far as the duties went, a young noble like Chastelet succeeded far better in the barracks than at hawking water or watching after children. He even acquitted himself fairly well while accompanying his master on slaving expeditions—both at sea (as a servant, not a *galeotto)* as far afield as the Azores and Cape Verde Islands, and well into the interior desert of Algeria. Once back in Algiers, his *odobashi* had warmed to him enough that he began to hint he might even loan Chastelet the funds to buy his freedom. Instead, Chastelet cooked up an elaborate scheme that involved getting himself sold, at no profit to his *odobashi,* to a professional slave-dealer named Ibrahim the Black, a scheme that was meant to eventually get himself and another Frenchmen ransomed.

Like most of his other plans, this too fell through, leaving Chastelet stuck as the slave of a dealer who would have no doubt sold him yet again, but for the arrival of the Trinitarian fathers, who had come especially to arrange a general ransom of French slaves. By Chastelet's good luck, Ibrahim the Black refused to ransom only one Frenchman, and insisted that the Trinitarians pay for Chastelet as well. At the last moment, it seems, someone found the necessary 100 pieces-of-eight—not in actual cash, but in "opium, coral, and wood cloth"—to get René du Chastelet des Boys out of slavery and eventually back to France, free at last to continue what he called his Odyssey.

CHAPTER 10

PRIVATE SLAVES

When the corsairs sailed into their home ports, it was a time for celebration. Cities like Algiers, Salé, and Valetta, where the chief industry was piracy and slaving, saw the arrival of prizes filled with loot and captives as a grand occasion, and every successful *re'is* tried to make the most of the moment of his return. Joseph Morgan painted a nice picture of how far some captains would go in proclaiming their triumph to the townspeople, who came running to have a look:

> One may readily know when a Corsair has taken a Prize, since, if the Weather will permit, he always brings her in-tow, and approaches, firing every' now and then A Gun, till he enters the Port: And sometimes, for Joy, he continues firing the whole Day long. One may, likewise, know at a Distance what Nation the Prize is of, by her Colours, which he commonly brings in flying at the Bolt-sprit-Top. If it is a very rich Prize indeed, he spares no Powder, but fires perpetually, even before he can be seen or heard from Algiers.[1]

Not surprisingly, the prisoners on board did not find such festivities especially cheering. "The (corsair] vessels arrived," wrote João Mascarenhas of his own entry into Algiers harbor, "with all their banners, their bells, their short trumpets, their artillery salvos, to celebrate a festival that, for us captives, could have only been sad, painful, and unfortunate." It was instead just another stage of the process that turned them from once-free men and women into human chattel. How the slaves were brought on to shore, once their galley was

docked, was largely up to the whim of the re'is. Sometimes they were marched almost in parade order, as Filippo Pananti reported, probably as a prelude to their formal presentation to the ruling powers. Chastelet des Boys's experience was similar, and he wrote of how "our miserable troop was conducted to the palace of the Pasha, to a racket of trumpets and *atabales* [big drums]." Other times, however, they were driven out in no particular order, straight into the thick of the waiting crowd. It could be a frightening experience. As Elliot recalled of his arrival in Salé:

> We were accompanied by several Hundreds of idle rascally People and roguish Boys, who came out of the Town to meet us and welcomed us with horrod barbarous Shouts, somewhat like the *Irish Hubbub. We* in the mean Time were forced like a drove of Sheep through the several Streets, the People crouding to Gaze upon us and curse us, for Civility is a Piece of Religion with them.[2]

Although most of these captives already thought of themselves as slaves—and were certainly treated as such by the populace—they were still in something of a legal limbo until their status was determined by the authorities. This was usually accomplished through what de la Motte called a "very strict and rigid Examination" before the local ruler—the Emperor's agent in Salé, the *dey* in Algiers, the *bey* in Tunis, the pasha in Tripoli, or the Grand Master's representative in Malta. De la Motte was writing in the 1710s, however. From what we can glean from earlier slave narratives, this judgement was still fairly ad hoc in the 16th and 17th centuries. Especially during the many years when hostilities were general in the Mediterranean and both Christians and Muslims had a wide set of enemies to chose from, almost anyone, whatever their country' of origin, could be declared a slave. Only with the gradual establishment of the consular system in Barbary—a process that began, sporadically, with the French in the early 1600s and continued for over a century'—was there likely to be someone on hand to look out for the interests and rights of the new captives.

By the early 1700s, however, most of the major powers had a consul in place in the principal cities of Barbary. In primary corsair centers like Algiers, even the Swedes and Danes had someone to speak up for their captive subjects. At issue, as de La Motte noted, was "whether they [had] serv'd for Pay, or were Passengers, for in the case they took Pay, and were taken aboard the Ships of the Enemies, they are retained in Slavery. But if

they are Passengers, the Consuls reclaim them, and, commonly speaking, they are delivered." By the later 1700s, passports and other forms of identification had become fairly common among passengers on ships, which meant that at least some captives could hope to be positively identified and their nationality verified. Any consul who presented a well-documented case for liberation—and who represented a power with warships in the area—could expect the pasha or *dey* to accede.[3]

Still, for prisoners whose nationalities put them among their captor's many and shifting enemies, there was little to be done, at least not at this stage of the proceedings. Pananti reported that when the British consul, a Mr. McDonnel, intervened at the assembly and "formally demanded" the release of several English subjects taken with Pananti, the *dey* soon agreed. On the other hand, when McDonnel made a further request to free several of the other passengers on Pananti's ship, men and women who were not British or had no proof that they were, the consul was bluntly turned down.

Captives like those, who had no one persuasive enough to gain their freedom, would quickly learn their fate. Pananti, who was among their number, reported that members of the *(ley's* council soon began to murmur '"A good prize! Prisoners! Slaves!"'—and their words were picked up and amplified outside the audience hall, where a crowd of interested onlookers had gathered. These took up the call and turned it into a chant, partly as a celebration and partly as a demand: "This was followed by a *cry* in the hall of *Schiavi! Schiavi!* '"slaves! slaves!"' Pananti wrote, "which horrible word was echoed by the multitude. The members of the council then rose ... leaving us the devoted victims of slavery."[4]

Having determined which of the captives would be immediately released and which would become slaves, the pasha could then begin the process of selecting his *penjic,* or share of the captives. This varied from place to place, though it was usually around 1 captive in 8 in Barbary and 1 in 10 in Malta. In Algiers, the *dey* could also lay claim to one of the "important personages" among the captives, though some observers claimed that this individual was not a bonus, but was counted against the *penjic.* In his choice, the pasha was guided by several motives. Obviously he was on the lookout for wealthy individuals who might fetch a good ransom—especially "Women of any Rank, whom the Dey never fails to take to his Share." At the same time, he needed slaves to staff his household, "a certain Number of the young and handsome ones, [to] attend him as Pages." The rest of the pasha s

choice, usually the great majority, had a more mundane, and more terrible, fate in store—they were destined to serve as public slaves, either on construction projects or as oarsmen on the state galleys.[5]

Knowledgeable slaves dreaded getting picked by the pasha and did everything they could to avoid it. Acting on the advice of veteran slaves, they stood nervously in their rows and tried to remain as inconspicuous as possible, concealing as much as they could about their backgrounds, "without rebuffing the questions of the Jews who serve as experts to the Pasha, when he does his choosing." In Chastelet des Boys's opinion, "It was necessary above all to say that you were bereft of wealth, ignorant of a profession, and admit only [to being] a soldier of fortune." The pasha and his minions obviously gave little credence to such bland and repetitive answers, and as they circulated slowly along the ranks of the new captives, one can imagine the tension in the audience hall:

> Presented as we were before him, our heads and feet bare, he had long and confidential conferences (without making a secret of it) with the many Jews and Turks, who, ceaselessly studying us, one after the other, with great care, seemed to be giving him advice.[6]

Having made his pick, the pasha's men rounded up his unhappy crew and marched them off to begin their services for the state. The remaining men and women, now officially slaves of the re'is and his backers, might be immediately taken off for sale. Every major corsair port had its slave market—known generically as the *badestan* in Algiers, the *Souq-el-Ghevl* in Salé, the *Souq el Berka* in Tunis, the *Mercato degli schiavi* in Valetta and Livorno. On the other hand, the sale could also be delayed, sometimes because the sellers wanted to accumulate enough fresh slaves to make for a festive occasion. As they stayed in this limbo, the slaves might be surprisingly well treated, sometimes lodged in the palace of the pasha or some other local notable and fed on meat and white bread. Older, more experienced slaves were also allowed to come by and befriend them, offering advice on how to get by in this frightening new world, promising to help their proteges get the best master from among the various bidders at the market.

Such kindnesses were not entirely disinterested. Slave owners knew there was a risk that newcomers, thrust abruptly into the rigors of slave labor, could easily die from the shock. It was better to let them acclimatize a bit first. Much the same practice was followed in the

Americas with slaves freshly arrived from Africa. Nor were the blandishments of the older slaves as benign as they might appear. Often these veterans were secretly in the pay of the slave dealers at the market, known colloquially as *maquignons, or* horse traders. While they comforted the newcomers and brought them occasional treats, the older slaves were also busy trying to worm out any information, about backgrounds or professions, that might improve prices at auction.

Finally the time for sale was declared, and the idyl of seasoning came to an abrupt end. Slaves were driven to the *badestan,* located "right in the middle of [Algiers] ... a square plaza in the form of four galleries, all of which are uncovered." Shirking along the way did no good, for "if either there were repining, or any drawing back, then certain Moors and Officers attended, either to beat you forward, or thrust you in the sides with goads" (see Figure 10.1). Once arrived, the slaves were put through their paces, "made to march, jump, and caper to the blow of a stick." The experience was a defining moment of enslavement, almost a rite of passage. No one who had been haggled over ever forgot the experience of being sold "in their markets like horses: for according to age and strength they are prized." Emanuel d'Aranda recalled:

> A certain old man with a staff in his hand took me by the arm, and led me several times about the Market-place, and those who were desirous to buy me, ask'd me my Country, name, and profession ... They took me by the hand, to see if it were hard and brawny by working, and they caus'd me to open my mouth, to see whether my teeth were able to overcome Bisket in the Gallics.[7]

Teeth could tell the *maquignons* a lot, both about a slave's background and how he would do at the various jobs he might be put to. "They use the teeth not only to discover [the slaves'] age," noted Dan, "but also to determine if they are subject to catarrh and discharges that might [be an] inconvenience and render them less serviceable." Quality dentistry was taken as one of the best indicators of a slave's overall health as well as a sign of how well he would survive his coming ordeals. William Okeley summed the case up:

> A good, strong, entire set of Grinders will advance the Price [of sale] considerably ... [since the dealers] know that they who have not *Teeth,* cannot *eat,* and they that cannot *eat,* cannot *work;* and they that cannot work, are not *for their* turn; and they that are not

Figure 10.1 Slaves driven into the *badestan.* Pierre Dan, *Historic van Barbar' yen en des zelfs Zee'Roovers* (Amsterdam, 1684).

> *for their turn;* are not for *their money.* And Secondly, they intend to keep them *at hard meat all the Year,* and it must not *be gums,* hut *solid Teeth* (nay, if it were possible, case-harden'd Teeth) that must chew it; and when all is done, they had need of *the Ostriches Stomach* to digest it.[8]

Buyers also used hands and faces to provide them with clues about these men who were consciously trying to give away as little about themselves as possible. Seemingly small things might reveal a good deal. The *maquignons* took a careful look at slaves' earlobes, for example, to discover those that had been pierced, "from which they infer that they are people of quality and distinguished from common folk, since as infants they had worn ear-bobs."[9] The better dealers could read the skin of slaves' hands and face as if it were a book (see Figure 10.2). Germain Mouette, who was sold at the market in Sale, in 1670, noted:

> Those who buy Slaves observe their Countenance, and look into their Hands to see whether they are Labouring Men or Well

Figure 10.2 Slave inspection in the *hodestan.* Pierre Dan, *Historic van Barbaryen en des zelfs Zee-Roovers* (Amsterdam, 1684).

> Bom: When they meet with one that has a curious Complexion, and soft Hands, they conclude he is Rich, and that makes them advance upon one another for the Poor Creature, hoping, when they have him, to extract a considerable Ransom; and therefore 'tis afterwards hard to get out of their Hands.[10]

Like animal dealers everywhere, many of these *maquignons* treated the business they were in as something of an art form and believed that the human body contained more information than what was to be found just in callouses or worn incisors. "They examine the eyes and they even study the physiognomy of the face, to draw from it some conjecture of [the slaves'] nature, good or bad." Pierre Dan went on to claim that:

> The principal [reason] that they look carefully at the hands ... is so that, by Chiromancy [that is, palm reading], to which they are strongly devoted—a study that, be that as it may, is vain and ridiculous—they believe they can recognize in the lines

> and the signs that they see if such slaves will live a long time, if they show any sign of sickness, of [future] danger, of peril, of bad happenings, or if even in their hand their death is not marked.[11]

Much of this poking and prodding was simply to collect information about the slaves, of course, hut there was also the interaction between dealers. As in any marketplace, the actual selling of slaves in North Africa (and presumably in Malta and Constantinople as well) was a highly theatrical occasion, where owners and their touts sang out the virtues of their chattel, while prospective bidders scoffed and shouted them down. Okeley captured something of this contentious spirit in the *badestan* in Algiers, sometimes so similar to the animal trade fairs that would have been quite familiar to his readers back in England:

> You shall have *the seller* commend his Goods to the Sky, and *the* Buyer, on the other hand, as much *undervalue them* ... Oh, says the Seller, mark what a *back he has,* what *a breadth he bears* between the shoulders! What a *Chest!* How *strong set!* How fitted on the nonce *for Burdens! He'le do but* e'ne *too much work. Pish,* says the Buyer. He looks like a *Pillard,* like a *very Meacock at his ProV' ender,* and one that seems to be surfeited.[12]

Once the buyers had finished prodding and arguing over what was being offered, the auction actually began. For much of the previous exchange, the slaves had often had no very clear idea what had been going on around them, but at this point things became fairly clear. As d'Aranda recalled:

> Then they caus'd us all to sit down, and the old man took the first in order, and led him three or four times about the Market, crying *Arrache, Arrache,* that is, Who *offers most*[7]. The first being sold, he was set on the other side of the Market, and another was serv'd after the same manner ... I heard several persons proffering mony, yet understood not what they said.[13]

At the *badestan* the winning bids were typically fairly low, because this was only the "first sale," that is, the sum that would be paid to the corsairs who made the capture. Slaves who, not surprisingly, failed to

understand this were sometimes actually offended when they discovered how little they had been sold for. D'Arvieux told the story, drawing on some cherished stereotypes, of a Spaniard, who, "upon hearing that he was to be sold for one hundred piastres, went all puffed up with rage to the one who had purchased him [and] demanded whether he took him for a donkey, that he should value a man of his fashion at such a price."[14] Other slaves, perhaps to avoid mentally confronting the bondage that now awaited them, bragged to one another as to who had sold for the greater amount. Much the same tales were told of African slaves boasting of their sale prices in the Americas.

Badestan prices were low because they were only provisional. When this sale was over, each slave was given his bid price, written sometimes on a plaque to stick in his hat, sometimes directly on his bare breast, and the whole lot was marched back to the pasha's palace. There, the local ruler could exercise his option to buy any of the slaves he wanted at this first price offered. After he had made his pick, if any, there commenced a second sale, carried on by "all those who are really disposed to purchase." On this occasion, bids could rise quite a bit higher—often to twice that of the original offer. The difference between the first and the final, second price was a form of slave tax, paid to the *delic;* or *belie;*—the public fisc—as the administration's profit from the trade. The auction being concluded, the *dey* or pasha took his additional slaves, leaving the others "to the last Bidders, who take home their Purchase, and do with them what they please.''[15]

What pleased these new owners could vary greatly. Broadly speaking, there were three general options for how they could use their slaves. Many kept slaves for work, just as they did in the Americas or elsewhere in the Early Modern world. Tasks that would have been carried out by (poorly) paid servants or laborers in, for example, England, France, or Holland, were in many Mediterranean communities done by slaves. As Laugier de Tassy said of Algiers, "Here there are no free Servants, but every House, from that of the Dey to the meanest Inhabitant, has *Christian* Slaves." Much the same was also true on the Christian side of the Mediterranean. The French traveler Jean Dumont observed that, "almost all the Maltese are served by slaves, who are suffer'd to walk freely about the streets all day." Such was also the case for many of the 10,000 to 20,000 Muslim slaves estimated to live in 17th-century Naples, and a great percentage of the slaves in

Tunis and Cairo were also worked by private owners, often people of very modest means.[16]

It is hard to generalize about the lives and work of such slaves. By all accounts, the most agreeable—or anyway the least disagreeable-situation for a private slave in Barbar)' was that of personal attendant to a janissary, the elite soldiers who largely ran the Ottoman Empire. As Chastelet des Boys and others observed, a certain male camaraderie could develop between man and master in the life of the barracks. Many Turkish soldiers did not seem very demanding of their slave, and the status that the janissaries enjoyed as the dominant military force in cities like Algiers and Tunis also tended to rub off on their Christian lackeys.

Though the actual work may not have been too hard, it was rather less desirable to end up as a household slave, especially when owned by a single woman. Such was the fate of Chastelet, who wrote of serving Fatima, the widow of a Flemish renegade, in company with just one other slave—a Black woman "who helped me wonderfully." Men in his position were set to "fetching water at a nearby fountain for scrubbing the abode, and the rest of the day carrying in my arms a small child of two or three years."[17] Others wrote of cleaning out the latrines and carrying off the night soil. Many men of the 17th century found childcare embarrassing, if not too fatiguing, but more difficult for many was taking their orders from a woman. Some recent research into female slave owners in this era is just beginning to shed light both on how common female masters were and on the sometimes-fraught relationships they had with their male slaves. As for the slaves themselves, their distaste for the experience may be one reason why few of them besides Chastelet des Boys wrote about it.

Better descriptions survive of slavery in some of the larger households, perhaps because such slaves caught the attention and imagination of observers. The French diplomat Laurent D'Arvieux wrote of his visit to the country villa of "one of the most powerful personages in Tunis," the renegade slaver Mehmed Chelebi. Also known as Dom Philippe, governor of the port of Tunis and personal owner of a galley, 3 smaller vessels, and some 250 *galeotti,* Chelebi also maintained a refined household. D'Arviuex reported that while dining there he was served by "a troop of Slaves, very appropriately dressed" and delighted by a "concert of harps, violins, guitars, imperials, cistres, angeliques,

on which the slaves of Dorn Philippe played some Italian and Spanish tunes perfectly well."[16] The Flemish slave Emanuel d'Aranda also provided a thumbnail sketch of the household of Ali Pegelin, who was in many ways Chelebi's equivalent in Algiers a generation earlier. Personal owner of several galleys and some 500 *galeotti,* Pegelin also kept in his house (along with d'Aranda and his two Flemish friends):

> Twenty Women-slaves, Christians, who waited on his wife. But they are not often seen, in regard they come but very seidome out of their lodgings. There were also ten or twelve Men-slaves who were employ'd about the house, and forty young Boys between nine years of age and fifteen, who durst not trust to go out of the house, for fear of being debauch'd by the *Turks* ... And those Boys, he kept them onely out of ostentation, as great Lords in Christendome keep Pages, Lacqueys, and Halbardiers.[19]

Not all slaves owned by private individuals were put to household duties. Many were sent to dig, plant, or bring in the harvest on their master's agricultural holdings outside the city. Chastelet des Boys, who found the tools unfamiliar and the sun unpleasantly strong, lasted less than a week at such work, and by all accounts it was hot and strenuous labor. As a sympathetic missionary said of Nierlé of Laodicea, a Greek Catholic slave in Algiers, "He is in good health and suffers neither for food nor for clothing, hut he finds hoeing in his master's garden hard and very' tiring." This may well have been among the most common work for private slaves, mostly carried on outside the nominal cash economy, and therefore largely unrecorded. Over the years, their continuous labor around Algiers had produced "a very' delightful Country', prodigious fertile in Corn, Pulse [legumes], Fruits, and Flowers, agreeably diversified with cultivated Hills and Plains." The swath of developed land was large. The Trinitarian father Pierre Dan claimed that farms covered "all the country that is twenty or twenty-five leagues [60 to 75 miles] from Algiers," and though in some places the arable land may have been just a coastal strip, extending a mile or two inland, this still meant that some 300,000 acres of farmland needed tending.[20]

This was not a region of large farms—certainly nothing like the plantations that dominated the Old South, or the sugar factories of the Caribbean. Instead, the fertile strip of coastal land stretching out from

Algiers and up some interior valleys was broken up into a mosaic of fairly small holdings. Called *faits* by the Algerians, and known as masseries or *giardini*—"gardens"—by the slaves, these plots supposedly ranged somewhere between 8,000 to 18,000 in number. One quite punctilious writer (who supposedly had a look "at the account books of the Pasha"), claimed there were precisely 14,698 in the year 1619. If there were even 10,000 such private holdings, this would give them an average size of around 30 acres, which certainly seems possible. Some of these *masserie* seem to have doubled as the sites for villas or pleasure houses. A 16th-century missionary wrote how the potentates of Algiers liked "to go for recreation and pleasure into the countryside, at their gardens;" and Chastelet des Boys described the holdings of his master, Khodja Ali, as "this little rustic house, rather well built, situated in the middle of a great garden, watered with a quantity of fountains."[21]

Other *fahs* were clearly intended to grow produce for the master's table, however, and these required work like any other farm. D'Aranda wrote of being sent "to delve in the Vineyard belonging to a Country-house of our Patron's, which was very hard work," and many other slaves complained about similar tasks. The work they did ranged from gardening to harvesting crops, from pressing olives and grinding wheat to cutting reeds and digging ditches. Some even claimed, in a language charged with the most loaded symbol of oppression, that they were "made to work the earth attached to a yoke, along with an ass or a horse, according to the pleasure or caprice of their Master."[22]

For convenience sake, farm gangs that worked on *masseries* within four or five miles of the city gates generally passed the night in their master's house in town, rising before dawn every day to make the trek out to his fields and orchards. Farms lying further along the coast, or in one of the interior valleys, were another matter. Such plots were too far away from Algiers for a daily commute, and the slaves stayed overnight, perhaps for a week at a time. In the furthest farms slaves apparently had to take up more or less permanent residence, sometimes staying for months, to get the most out of a climate that allowed them to plant and harvest multiple crops. Some of the *fahs* had proper houses, or at least a barracks, in which the workers could pass the night, but often the slaves complained that there were no accommodations provided for them at all, and in consequence "one has to sleep on the naked earth as if he were a dog."

Many of the *mosseries* were tended by Moors or renegade Christians overseers, but contemporary observers insisted that almost every plot also employed a few slaves. How many is unclear, though the number quite probably fell within the somewhat pixilated range proposed by missionary Giovanni di S. Bonaventura, who asserted that "in each *Giardino* there are two or four or even six Christians, or at least one."

Many other observers agreed that there were, at a minimum, one or two slaves working each plot. No doubt they were also well aware of what this implied—to keep the 10,000 or more *fahs* bordering Algiers green and productive would have necessarily required the labor of at least 10,000 Christian slaves, more than one-third of all those enslaved by Algiers.

This is significant for several reasons. For one, it may help answer the objections of modern scholars like Federico Cresti that, given what we know of the physical size of Early Modern Algiers (around 130 acres inside the walls), there simply was not enough room for so many Christian slaves in the city. It now appears, however, that many of those who would not have fit inside this crowded urban space were probably not there anyway, but living out on farms located up to 60 or 70 miles from the city walls. Those posted on *fahs* more than 10 miles from the city walls—and this would seem to have been the majority—were slaves of Algiers only in the sense that their masters lived in the city. Their feelings of isolation and abandonment was well captured by William Okeley, who feared that should he be sent to his master's "fair farm" 12 miles from the city, he would be so cut off from his fellow Christians that he would lose "all means, all helps, and therefore all hopes to rid myself out of this slavery.[3] "[2]

It is also significant because it reminds us that, in Algiers and probably Tunis (so extensively cultivated, it was said, that "they grow oranges in such great quantities that the trees are used for making charcoal"), the enslavement of Christians was far more of a rural and agricultural phenomenon than has been generally realized. Those who have written about slavery on the Barbary Coast in recent decades have treated it as essentially city- or maritime-based, very different from the cotton- and tobacco-growing Old South. The slaves in Algiers at the time knew better, however. They dreaded the hot and tiring work on the *fahs*—the isolation and the poor accommodations where they had to "live like beasts." They feared a master's threat to

send them "up into the country, where [they] should never see Christendom again, and endure the extremity of a miserable banishment," and not only because they would lose contact with their fellow Christians. Anyone spending the night outside the city walls, and especially on the more far-flung farms, ran the real risk of being re-enslaved, not by corsairs, but by marauding bands of Berbers, who would "feed them as little as possible [and] take from them the greatest amount of work they can give." As De La Motte noted:

> Sometimes those [Berbers] come by Night and suddenly attack those Farmhouses and Gardens, which are in the Neighborhood of the great Towns, and wherein are generally some *Christian* Slaves, to cultivate and look after them, whom they carry off, as well as those Turks, &c. who are so unfortunate as to be there present; for they are no more favorable to them [the Turks] than to the *Christians*."*

One common character of private slaves such as these, whether they worked the land, cared for children, played music, or emptied latrines, was that they all worked to provide their masters with service rather than income. Some who labored on the *masseries* may have generated some cash for their owner, after he sold off excess produce, but as a class their role as slaves was, by and large, to carry out "the tasks that free men were no longer willing to do." Whether they gave their owners' status or amusement, or whether they simply took care of drudge work around the household, they performed their services largely outside of the cash economy.[2]

This was not the only relationship between master and slave, however, at least not in Barbary. A good many private owners seem to have bought their slaves less for service than as an investment. Some hoped to make a steady return on their purchase, rather like their European contemporaries who put their excess capital in state bonds or in joint-stock companies, counting on a certain regular income from what they had invested. Others, dealers who worked as specialists in the business, hoped to realize their profit in a single stroke, by reselling their purchase, either to another Muslim or Jew in North Africa, or to the Christians who came to Barbary to ransom their fellow Europeans.

Many masters of this sort insisted that their slaves should not only support themselves, in terms of paying for the cost of meals and

lodging, but that they also had to pay interest on the money spent to purchase them, as if this had been a form of loan. As such, it was customary that such slaves were "obliged to pay their master a certain sum every month." How much this monthly (or weekly) sum—known as a *gileffo* (or *geliffo,* or *gelif)*—might be was up to the owner, though it might amount to about 1% of the slave's purchase price per month, equal to perhaps 12 percent to 15 percent per year. Much like the return on investments made in Europe, in other words.

How this money was to be raised was often up to the master. Some, like Chastelet des Boy's Khodja Ali, essentially ran a slave-based business out of his house, outfitting his men with the necessary water pitchers and sending them to scour the city in what was partly a public service and partly simple begging. Others seemed to care less about where their *gileffo* came from, only that it arrived on time. Failure to produce it, as Chastelet found out, would probably result in a beating, a situation that drove William Okeley to rail at the unfairness of it all:

> My Patron ... told me, I must allow him two *Dollars per moneth,* and Live ashore where I would, and get it where I could. This was a *hard chapter.* That he that could not *maintain himself,* should be compelled to contribute to the maintenance of *another;* it was difficult *to raise increase* out of no *stock,* and to *pay Interest* out of no *Principal;* but there was no contending.[26]

The frustration of his situation, Okeley admitted, drove him to thoughts of suicide. In desperation, he tried to persuade a fellow English slave, a tailor by profession, to take him in and teach him his trade. This soon fell through, however, leaving Okeley to wander Algiers until he came across another Englishman who could boast of having his own shop to "sell Lead, Iron, Shot, strong waters, Tobacco, and many other things." Okeley's new acquaintance was more than willing to partner with him, and "invited me to come and sit in the Shop with him; but seeing nothing but bare Walls, I asked him, *To what End? What Trade should tve drive there?* There's not much difference between *starving in the Streets and in the Shop."* Discovering that his new partner's interest in trade did not actually extend to having anything to sell, Okeley did what many slaves in his position were forced to do—he went to his master to borrow some start-up capital.

Masters loaning money to their own slaves seems to have been a fairly common practice, at least in North Africa. D'Aranda told of slaves who used borrowed funds to set up a number of enterprises that, while middling, at least made enough to pay back the original loan and their master's *gileffo.* Some, he recalled, "sold the children some toys or other," which they had constructed out of scraps of wood and leather. "Others had instruments for some childish plaies, and they always made a shift to get money out of the children." D'Aranda also wrote:

> [Ofl a young Lid, a *Hamburgher,* who at his being taken had lost an arm, and so could not do much for his livelihood, and yet his Patron allowed him nothing. But (borrowing money] he bought with it a pair of Nine Pins, and Pidgeon-holes. He went out of the City, neer the Gate, hir'd out his pins, and the Holes, to the children who were playing there, and so made a shift to live pretty well.[27]

Okeley, meanwhile, took the small sum advanced to him by his owner and "That very Night I went and bought a parcel of Tobacco; the next Morning we dress'd it, cut it, and fitted it for Sale." From such small beginnings, Okeley and his partner began to prosper. Using "some *Money we* had and some *Credit,"* they managed to buy a whole butt of wine, which they sold by the bottle and "got considerably by it." It may have been better if the two Englishmen had stuck to provisions like "Lead, Iron, and Shot," however—Okeley's partner soon showed a tendency to drink up their profits:

> It is very difficult to maintain Moderation in an exalted state, for even *our state* was capable of *better and worse, for* my Partner being elevated with our good Success, grew *a good fellow and a bad Husband,* neglecting his business, went tippling and fuddling [boozing! up and down, and the concerns of the Shop and Trade lay wholly on my shoulders.[28]

Okeley responded to the challenge of his drunken partner by inviting another Englishman, named John Randal, a glover by trade, to set up for business in their shop, "making canvas clothes for seamen that are slaves." Together, the three of them got through "three or four irksome years in this way of trading," each managing to pay off his *gileffo,* and

even saving a little in the process. It was, however, an unstable situation, as Okeley clearly recognized: "Our condition was bad, and in danger every day of being worse as the mutable Humours of our Patrons determin'd upon us, for our Shop and Trade was no *free hold."* Nor were they themselves free agents, as Okeley soon found out. When his master, ruined by speculation in the *corso,* was forced to sell all his slaves, Okeley ended up in the hands of an "old gentleman," an owner who treated him well enough, but who also wished him to give up his shop and devote himself full time to managing a country estate. Considering the way he had been treated in the past, Okeley fairly basked in the "great kindness" of his new master, who "loaded me home with *all manner of good Provisions that I might make merry with my Fellow Christians."* He soon realized, however, that his owner's farm was a trap, and moving there to run it would be a disaster:

> Though 1 might have been there a *petty Lord* and *Bashaw'd* it [i.e., acted like a pasha) over my *Fellou' servants,* yet *Slavery* had in it something of I know not what *harshness* that 1 could not *brook* ... 1 saw now evidently, that if I once *quitted my shop,* 1 should lose with it *all means, all helps,* and therefore, *all hopes* to rid my self out of this Slavery.[29]

Interestingly, it was the improvement in Okeley's condition, with the arrival of a more generous and thoughtful master, that finally pushed him to the breaking point. "The truth is," Okeley concluded, "in time we were so *habituated to Bondage,* that we almost *forgot Liberty,* and grew stupid and senseless of out Slavery." Shabby though his little shop was, it had provided Okeley with a certain independence and thus his sole link to freedom. Realizing that he might now have to give it up finally convinced Okeley it was time to make a move, and, with six others, he began to lay plans for escaping from Algiers.

Like Okeley, many other private slaves were pushed to despair by their master's expectation that they pay his *gielffo even* as they struggled to feed and house themselves. Not all of them had to struggle with their consciences as much as Okeley did, however, nor did they all hold to his belief that "accounted nothing *base* that was *honest,"* nor that *"necessity should ennoble a far meaner Employment."* Instead, many slaves took the easier way out—as d'Aranda observed "the

profession most us'd [among slaves] was stealing."[30] In Algiers and Tunis slave theft was reportedly rampant, bedeviling all classes of property owners. Many of these thieves were publically owned slaves, but it was the slaves in private hands who caused the most trouble, since their greater freedom of action gave them much more opportunity. As D'Avrieux observed:

> There are many of them who lodge with their Masters, and having the convenience of going out at night, they form a gang and go to break through the walls of the storehouses and shops, and in a couple of hours they can empty the best filled warehouse ... if they are surprised [in the act) they have only a few blows of a stick to fear, since everyone believes that the Christian Slaves are thieves by profession?[1]

It is true that the slave owners themselves could be remarkably nonchalant about what their chattel were up to. The great Algerian slave holder Ali Pegelin supposedly said that "his *Christians* wore Hooks on their Fingers," and that "his Slaves were all pilfering Rascals; that he could not help it, hut advised [those who complained] to be more careful of such Rogues in the future."[32] Historians of slavery in the Americas have generally interpreted such antisocial acts as thievery, as covert forms of resistance, a way for slaves to consciously or unconsciously challenge and delegitimize the very society that had condoned a greater theft—the slave's original capture and removal from his homeland.

In Barbary, where slave theft was directed not so much at the master as against ordinary Moorish or Jewish shopkeepers and householders, a less positive picture emerges. When slaves filched and then resold such pedestrian goods as "Woollen and Linnen cloaths, Shirts, Brass-pots, and other pieces of household-stuff," much of what they earned went eventually to their master, in the sense that they earned their monthly *gileffo* from the goods they fenced. Most of the rest they spent, of necessity, on their own food and lodging, since the majority of them were required "to work every day, yet not have a piece of bread from the Patron." The wealthy slave owners of Algiers and Tunis did little to stop their men from stealing, and sometimes even protected them from their victims' retribution—it was said of Ali Pegelin that he "had the Honour of having trained up the cleanest Set of Thieves that were

anywhere to be met with."[33] Far from engaging in acts of veiled rebellion, then, slaves in Barbar)' were really serving as agents *of* their masters, displacing the cost of their maintenance off on the general public. In this sense, slave theft in Barbar)' functioned more as an indirect (and ver)' inefficient) tax levied, by force, on middling citizens to support the ostentatious and luxurious lives of the wealthy.

The practice of requiring slaves to come up with a weekly or monthly *gileffo* was typically associated with private ownership, which was common in Algiers and Tunis but more rare in Tripoli and Morocco, where most slaves were state owned. In the Christian world most slaves were state owned, but there were exceptions. A good many Maltese owned their own slaves, though it would seem that they generally kept them for household work without expecting anything like a *gileffo.* On the other hand, one truism about Mediterranean bondage is that the practices on one coast were usually reflected on the other. And indeed, the sometime English slave known only as Mr. Roberts, writing in the 1670s, mentioned a certain "Don Antony *Panic,* the chief (slave) owner in Leghorn (Livorno], who had at least 400 Slaves which work'd about the Town daily, and paid him so much per Week."[34]

Not all the private owners in Algiers who wanted to profit off their slaves had to bother with working them directly, for there was an active market in slave rentals in the city (and presumably in the countryside as well). Anyone who needed manual labor to run some commercial or small-scale manufacturing operation could do so with hired slaves. The system of workshops and proto-factories that sprung up in Algiers and Tunis (though not in Malta, where such work was more tightly restricted), bore some resemblance to the factories operated with hired slave labor in such American cities as New Orleans and Baltimore in the 1700s and 1800s. As in the New World, such factory operators could enjoy the best aspects of both free and slave societies. Like slave owners, they could fully exploit their workers, who were not able to leave their posts or protest about the conditions. Like capitalists, they could respond to a drop in business by simply laying off their workers—sending them back to their actual masters, in other words—rather than having to find them other work.

We have no record of what it cost to rent such slaves, but masters presumably demanded enough to cover the usual *gileffo,* plus interest on the slave's original purchase price, and perhaps a little something

extra, as insurance against what we might call wear-and-tear on the workers. Whatever this added up to, it was almost certainly less than free workers would have cost, assuming that any could be found. Some factory bosses gave their workers food, but they had no more obligation to do so than did the slave owners, and the slaves might have to scrounge up something to eat in their off hours. Likewise, since the boss was only responsible for the slaves during the day, chances were that they passed the night in the house of their owner. The work they did was much like crafts carried out back home: Okeley, for one, noted how he was "commanded ... to go work in the Looms with two other English-men that were Slaves, and Linen-cloath Weavers." Most of them, however, ended up doing work that fed into the main two activities in these towns—outfitting the corsair fleets or building palaces. Pierre Dan, for example, wrote of brickyards "where [slaves] are employed in imitation of the Israelites held captive in Babylon."[35] D'Aranda, on the other hand, was sent to spin rope, work that "laid me down extremely wearied." Slaves in both Algiers and Constantinople were regularly rented out to the shipbuilding yards, while in Tripoli they were enlisted in "pounding gunpowder in this [city's] Powder mill." A great many more were leased to the corsair *re'is,* in that most basic form of slave labor—rowing in the galleys.

Quite often, masters who rented out their slaves were simply making some income on the side while waiting to realize the primary aim of their investment—the ransom. In North Africa there was an entire class of slave dealers who specialized in buying slaves for resale—in particular the so-called *Tagar ins,* Moors who had been driven from Spain throughout the 16th century, culminating in their mass expulsion in 1609-1610. Also in the trade were many renegade Christians and some Jews, who saw this "as a form of capital acquisition analogous to [that of] money, state bonds, or the stock exchange in Christendom." Some were open to selling their chattel to fellow Muslims or Jews, but the real profit was in waiting for a ransom to be organized by either the slave's family or a charitable organization back in the Christian world. Not only were the Christians usually willing to pay more, but in those deals the sort of troublesome questions that drove prices down in the *hades tan*—was a slave too long in service? Was he lame or diseased? Lazy or incompetent?—never came up.[36]

On the face of it, the process was fairly straightforward, as 18th-century French diplomat Venture de Paradis observed: "Those who buy slaves for speculation rent them out at the rate of an Algerian half-sequin per lunar month. By this method, the slave gives a return on the money that he has cost, and his master waits for the moment to extract a good ransom from him."[37] In practice, however, as with much else in Mediterranean slaving, there was a fair amount of nuance in how these slaves were to be managed in the period between their purchase and eventual resale. Since, as we have seen, most Europeans who had any wealth or connections did their best to hide the fact, both when they were captured and when they were sold, their owners were often in the dark as to how much relatives back home could pay. In the *badestan,* both buyers and sellers tried to play on the social ambiguities linked to the product they dealt in by making wild assertions—that this slave possessed noble blood, that one had church benefices, another was vastly rich.

Part of the eternal psychological theater of the market place, such claims also established a first, scattershot baseline for setting an actual ransom. When George Elliot's seller in the *Souq'ebGhezel of* Salé loudly proclaimed him to be "a Relation of the now Duke *of Norfolk* ... [and] put a great Value on me," the *Tagarin* did not receive (nor probably expect) the price he had demanded. By the sheer temerity of his claim, however, he did establish the premise that Elliott was *somebody—we* know that he was a master of Cambridge—whose intrinsic value would start the bidding a notch or two higher than average. In fact, when, after much delay, Elliot finally was sold, it was to (as he put it) "a cunning *Jewish* Merchant ... [who] bought me with a design to extort from me a great Ransom."[38]

What that ransom should be, great or small, was as fluid as the identities assigned to many of the slaves. Slave and master had to work out the expected price between them. English slaves called it their "measure"—their *taille* or *taglio* in French or Italian, their *courta* in the Lingua Franca. Establishing just what it would be was often a complex act that could call for some careful bargaining. Admittedly, some *Tagarin* simply wanted to unload their purchases as quickly as possible, to keep risks down, and they made few bones about negotiating with their slaves. They knew that plague could strike—as it did every few years—and wipe out their entire stable of slaves in just a few days. By the later 17th century, the chances had also greatly increased that French or British might send a fleet to bombard Tunis or Algiers, demanding the

release of their co-nationals for the price of purchase—bringing the dealers no profit at all. D'Arvieux noted how, as a result, "the French are ordinarily those who sell at the cheapest price, because ... Owners feared that the King [of France] would take them back through some Treaty, and they would be obliged to give them up [only] for the purchase price." To beat the odds, some dealers might offer steep discounts to those slaves who could pay their ransom quickly—João Mascarenhas noted that "if the cash arrives in less than a year, [slaves] can pay their buyers their purchase price plus fifty percent; if they wait a year or more, they must promise a hundred percent more."[39]

Still, many a *Tagarin* held onto his slave, in the hope of eventually realizing a big return—usually a ransom of three or four times what he originally paid. This was by necessity a lengthy process, since the slaves themselves had to communicate with their relatives and friends back home, and letters could take months to cross the Mediterranean and find their recipient. Sometimes a slave might protest that his relations were so poor as to not be worth writing to, in which case, his master would remind him of the consequences. So Germain Mouette was cautioned by one of his four co-owners, the Rabbi Yemin:

> "Well," said he, "if you have nothing, as you pretend, you may at least wrote a Letter to your Relations, for them to gather Alms to get you out of our Hands: For, if you will not [write], we shall load you with four Chains, beat you like a Dog, and starve you in a Dungeon." Having heard those dismal Words, I ask'd fora Pen, Ink and Paper.. .[40]

Once the news of a man or woman's enslavement reached home, it was necessary for relatives to sell family possessions, borrow money, or appeal to local charities—all of which meant that some years might pass before the money finally arrived at one of the appropriate agents in Marseilles or (more likely) Livorno. These were usually Jewish merchants with family connections in North Africa, and they arranged for the transfer of funds by letter of credit—sort of like a modern money-wiring service—since it was never easy or wise to send cash directly to Barbary.

While waiting for a response, slave dealers usually rented out their slaves, just like many ordinary owners, though with one important difference. A *Tagarin* naturally wanted to make a return off his slave, but in the process he also tried to make that slave's life uncomfortable enough that he or she would write all the more urgently, to implore

those back home to pay generously and not delay. Dealers in corsair outposts like Dulcigno, Santa Maura, or Lepanto—the bane of Italy's Adriatic coast during the later 1600s—pressured their slaves by threatening to sell them to a place deeper in the land of Islam—much like slave owners in Virginia and the Carolinas would threaten their recalcitrant slaves with sale to Texas or Mississippi. In Dulcigno, the threat would be sale to Algiers, where a slave would find it much harder and more expensive to buy his freedom. For a slave already in Algiers, on the other hand, there was always the threat (as we have seen) to send him to the interior or sell him to the Turkish Imperial Fleet, after which (as one slave wrote home) "he would be without hope of ever seeing the Land of Christians again."

Such threats were something of a bluff on the dealer's part, since what he really wanted was the ransom—selling a slave to Algiers or the Imperial Fleet would generally have fetched him much less profit. The trick was to make the threat convincing enough to scare the slave. Only a slave who was thoroughly terrorized would put enough pressure on his relatives to get them to raise a ransom that was really beyond their capacity. Or so the reasoning went, and certainly pressure was sometimes needed to get those at home to sell what few possessions they had, condemning themselves to a lifetime of penury, in order to free their kin. If relatives were too slow in raising the funds, the threat might lose much of its urgency, forcing the dealer to follow through and actually sell his slave. Judging by their letters, however, slaves did their best to keep the panic levels high. As Micozzo di Bastiano wrote home to Cittanuova, on the Italian Adriatic in 1677:

> For the love of God, my Father, do not abandon me in this horrible captivity; for the Viscera of the Virgin Mar)', that which you have to do, do it with all speed possible, since if my ransom does not arrive soon, my Master will send me to the Galleys, where others of my companions have [already] gone. For the Holy Souls of Purgatory, do not let me die in despair within the Galleys, but either with [public] Charity or with your help get me out of this Hell, where I remain, with irons and fetters and chains around my neck and ankles.[41]

Another way for the *Tagarin* to keep those desperate letters coming was to rent a slave out for especially nasty work—debilitating and, if

possible, disgusting tasks that would drive him to despair while not actually crippling or killing him. Of course, many slaves whose masters had no intention of ransoming them were given similar work and conditions—such was the nature of slave labor. Still, if contemporary observers can be believed, the *Tagarin were* especially skilled at mismatching slave and labor, to increase a captive's suffering and therefore his alacrity in seeking help. This was especially true when the slave happened to be a Spaniard, since the *Tagarin* never forgot their persecution and expulsion from Spain in 1609. It was said that, as a result, "The *Spanish* Slaves greatly dread falling into the Hands of a *Tagarine,* or *Morisco* Patron ... who still remember the Injuries done to their Fore-Fathers ... they being, generally, the worst Masters they can have, on Account of those old Grudges."[42]

It may have been Emanuel d'Aranda's Spanish connections as much as his refined airs—he was a Flemish student captured while coming back from studying in Madrid—that made it so difficult for him to get his ransom set.[43] Taken to the *badestan,* d'Aranda was sold to a renegade for 200 "patacoons" (his term for the Algerian *pataca gorda),* equal to about 50 English pounds. It was a decent price, a good indication that his buyer thought he was getting someone respectable. Such suspicions, once aroused, spread quickly in the slave dealing world, and, sure enough, when it came time for the second sale, the pasha exercised his right to take d'Aranda and two of his Flemish companions, "telling us," d'Aranda recalled, "he had been credibly inform'd that we were rich and persons of quality."

From this point through the rest of his narrative, Emanuel d'Aranda had to grapple with such claims about his high status and access to wealth. Having given a false name at the beginning, he presented himself (also falsely) as just a "poor soldier" to potential buyers and masters who insisted (also falsely) that he was a youth of great stature and limitless wealth back in Dunkirk. The masters, of course, had the power to make theirs the stronger case, and as soon as d'Aranda and his friends were bought by the pasha, "notwithstanding the quality he attributed to us," they were packed off to join the state *galeotti.* Sending a stubborn slave out for a stint on the *corso* was a popular way to soften him up, though there was always the risk of his dying. The three Flemings had a bit of luck, however. There were too many *galeotti for* the number of positions, and the pasha's chief *re'is* decided

that the newest slaves, including d'Aranda and his friends, would make for inferior rowers—"'Let us leave these wretched Raskals ashoar,'" he said in passing: "'they are yet Savages'—which expression," d'Aranda noted, "we thought no injury at the time."

The Flemings' happiness at being left out of the galleys was short-lived, however, for before long the pasha sought them out, saying he had been "inform'd that we were not persons of quality, nor rich." So he had decided to unload them on his admiral, the great renegade corsair, Ali Pegelin. Though Ali Pegelin was the owner of over 500 slaves and easily the most powerful man in the city, he still could not refuse his pasha's order to buy these three relatively useless slaves. He was not required to like it, however, and as he eyed the Flemings, he growled, "'Christians, I have bought you of the Bassa [Pasha], but at a very great rate.'" He left hanging the implications of what he intended to do about that, as he sent them to off to his private slave pen.

Ali Pegelin's intentions became obvious as soon as the three Flemings got to his *bagno,* where they were given nothing to eat and only the dirt floor for a bed. "We were there five hundred and fifty Christian Slaves," recalled d'Aranda, "all belonging to our Patron, *Alli Pelegin;* yet he did not allow any one of this great number ought towards his sustenance." Instead, d'Aranda and his friends had to work for their keep and were sent to carry out a succession of tasks, each more miserable than the one before. First, their overseer took them to a rope walk, "where we found all the tools requisite for the making of Ropes, and without asking us whether we understood any thing of the trade, we were forc'd to work." A few days of rope spinning left d'Aranda "extremely wearied," but he was then put on "another Trade ... much more painful to those who were not accustom'd to hard labor, to wit, the pounding of Wheat in a Stone-mortar." A few days of crushing grain and cartying bags of flour and then it was out to "delve in the Vineyard ... which was very hard work," and so on.

D'Aranda's travails continued for six months. Whenever he or his friends spilled grain, dropped their hoe, or misunderstood instructions shouted at them in Lingua Franca, their overseer would give them "three or four bangs with the Cudgel over the back," or "three or four blows over the face with his fist, so that the blood came out of my Mouth and Nose." Although d'Aranda's two friends eventually learned how to cheat the system well enough to evade work, find wine to

drink, and "hide themselves in some corner of the Bath, where they pass'd away the time at Cards," d'Aranda himself was thoroughly beaten down and dispirited with a slave's life. He was all the more gladdened, therefore, when they received some letters from Flanders conveying a sense of what their relatives could pay for their ransom.

So, d'Aranda wrote, "We went together... to our Patron's Lodgings." Finding Ali Pegelin seated on his divan, the three Flemings showed they had been in Algiers long enough to learn proper "Turkish Reverence," and they "kiss'd his Robe, or the Sleeve of his inner Garment." Word had gotten out, said d'Aranda, that Ali Pegelin was setting ransom prices with some of his 500 slaves. "Presuming that he was sufficiently inform'd of our poverty," he went on, "We ask'd him how much he would have from us." Ali Pegelin refused to make the first move, however, and played it coy. "'What are you willing to give?' reply'd he." Having to propose the opening hid was probably not the way the Flemings had hoped negotiations would go—they would have liked to keep their available finances (along with their true identities) secret for a bit longer. "'We expect your excellency should make your demand,' answer'd I, 'For it may be you will set such a rate on us that there will be no likelihood of any agreement.'" His request, however modestly worded, simply opened the way for Ali Pegelin to strike preemptively, however. "After he had a little consider'd, he said, 'You shall pay two thousand Patacoons.'"

This was a nobleman's ransom—the equivalent of just over 500 English pounds. It was a lot to ask for someone who claimed to be nothing more than "a poor soldier." It was also 10 times the Flemings' original auction prices, and they were flabbergasted. D'Aranda, who had probably hoped to go through a series of offers and counter-offers, felt compelled to come back with everything his relatives had pledged—a mere 500 *patacoons.* This impressed Ali Pegelin not at all. He was well aware, he insisted, that the young men were not who they claimed to be, and it was well known that one or another of them was "a near kinsman of the King of Dunkirk"—whatever that meant. They were very lucky, in fact, that he was not demanding 6,000 *patacoons* apiece. On that note, Ali Pegelin ended the audience, telling his slaves, "'You offer too little. I am now going out of the City for certain days ... we will talk further of it at my return.'"

And so the negotiations rested, though the three men from Flanders did not. To keep them enthusiastic about raising the highest ransoms

possible, Ali Pegelin had d'Aranda and his friends assigned as construction workers on one of his palaces. It was one of the most grueling tasks d'Aranda had to do as a slave, he would later write. "The place where the house was built was so steepy to get up to, that a Mule could not go up it with any load. So that all the materials were to be carried up on mens backs, or in their anns." With an infinity of such disagreeable tasks available, Ali Pegelin was in no hurry to lower his demands, in the expectation that, given enough time and subjected to enough misery, the Flemings would eventually find ways to meet his price. Even worse, once the yam about the "King of Dunkirk" made the rounds, the Pasha suddenly rediscovered his interest in these three youths and starting interfering in the negotiations to get a share for himself.

Many slaves had an easier time than d'Aranda and his friends at setting a ransom price, perhaps because there was less ambiguity about who they were and what they could possibly raise. It is a safe bet that, in most cases, the amount they agreed to pay was more than they (or their relatives) had originally thought possible and less than their owner originally demanded. In many cases, the money was eventually raised and the slaves managed to get home, perhaps after two or three years. Or, like Chastelet des Boys, they waited around as the years went by, and they sunk ever deeper into the dismal squalor of slavery, until finally, after their asking price had dropped low enough, one of the periodic charitable redemptions finally came by and set them free—if the plague had not taken them first.

As for the three Flemings, salvation came from another quarter. Some Turkish corsairs had been captured in the English Channel by Dunkirk seafarers, and before long negotiations were underway to effect an exchange—those corsairs with families in Algiers would be traded for d'Aranda and his friends. It was a deal that Ali Pegelin did not like at all. Even after he heard that the exchange rate—seven Muslims for just three Christians—was quite favorable to the people of Algiers, he complained, '"I have bought my Slaves to make some advantage by them, and not to exchange them for Turks!"' In the end he came around, but only when the Flemings arranged to reimburse him what he had paid for d'Aranda and one friend, while conceding that they would come up with 1,400 *patacoons* for the third youth, who Ali Pegelin maintained to the last was a kinsman of the King of Dunkirk.

CHAPTER 11

SLAVE OF THE GRAND DUKE

William Davies, naval barber-surgeon by trade, was enslaved in the late summer of 1597. His ship, the *Francis of Saltash,* William Lewellyn master, had sailed out of Cornwall early that year, "laden with Fish and Herrings, and such like commodities."[1] After stopping at various ports in Italy and North Africa, it was attacked by corsairs just a few miles off the coast of Tunis, while bound for Chios in the Aegean. The English crew put up some stout resistance, but the fight was terribly one-sided, and eventually, as Davies recalled, "our Ship [was] tome downe to the water with their Ordinance ... which spit fire like divels." Their main-mast "shot up by the boord" and their sails trailing in the sea, Davies and his comrades gave up the struggle. Their ship was quickly boarded, and they were made slaves—not by Muslim corsairs, as it happened, but by soldiers of the Grand Duke of Florence.

It might be surprising to hear of a crew of Christians enslaved by other Christians, but this was commonplace in the Mediterranean, where attacks at sea were guided as often by holy profit as by holy war. Anyway, the *Francis of Saltash was* a plausible target on both counts. Davies conceded as much, admitting at the outset of his tale that the ship was "freighted with Turkish goods by Turks, and some Turks aboard with us, for we traded as well with the Turke as the Christian." *Okay, we were carrying Turks, already!* The rules of engagement, as loosely understood by both sides at this (relatively) early stage of corsair warfare allowed the Florentines, knights of the Order of St. Stephan, to seize the Turks and their goods, and evidently the ship itself, as punishment. As to the English crew, they had responded to the knights' legitimate request for *visit'a* with cannon fire, which

rendered them, along with their ship, a fair prize. Besides, they were all Protestants—"Lutherans," as the Florentines called them indiscriminately. A Counter-Reformation rigor then held sway in the Catholic Mediterranean, and Protestants of all sorts were usually considered no better than the Muslims—maybe worse—as sworn enemies of the Church. To the knights who captured the Francis *of Saltash,* it made sense to just enslave them all—English, Turks, the lot.

Davies' account of his "eight yeares and ten moneths in this slaverie" is part of a much longer narrative, where he described travels throughout the Mediterranean and as far afield as the Amazon. His tale of enslavement is consequently somewhat brief, not as rich as those of Mascarenhas, Chastelet des Boys, d'Aranda, or Foss. It is an especially valuable tale, however, because Davies' account offers a rare glimpse into what it was like to be enslaved in Christian hands during the time of the corsairs. Certainly a great many Muslims felt the lash of a Christian overseer in those years, but few if any lived to write about it, or, if they did, their stories have yet to emerge. In that sense, Davies's tale, sketchy as it is, will have to stand in for those that could have been told by tens of thousands of Turks and Moors.

What is most striking about Davies's experience is how similar it was to Christian enslavement in Barbary. In particular, what Davies had to go through rowing in the Florentine galleys and working in the Tuscan port city of Livorno reveals a world of forced labor that was virtually identical with what awaited those Europeans who were chosen by a pasha or *dey* to serve as state slaves. The similarities began at the first moment, when the knights and their minions came on board "and stript every man starke naked," ordering that "we had as many Irons knocked upon us, and more, than then we were able to beare." Abused and degraded by their captors, the captives were broken to slavery long before any authority back in Tuscany ever formally declared that to be their status.

Once it was mended, the *Francis of Saltash was* sent back to Livorno, to be sold off as a fair prize. The captives, Turks and Englishmen alike, were distributed among the several galleys of the Florentine flotilla, which then continued on the *corso* for another month. Whether the captives were put to the oar immediately or chained in a hold is unclear, since Davies had nothing further to say about the voyage. He did note, however, that conditions were such that, in the course of the month, there resulted "the losse of many of our lives."

Once returned to Livorno, Davies reported, "we were all shaven both head and beard, and every man had given him a red coate and a red cap, telling of us that the Duke had made us all Slaves, to our great woe and griefe." This is the only sign Davies gave of the process of his enslavement—he said nothing of passing through any prize court or formal judgement. Nor was he sold in anything like an actual slave market, though he noted that they did exist in Livorno, observing how the Knights attacked Ottoman ships and villages, taking "Men, Women, and children, and selling them in Markets, like to Horses, Cowes, or Sheepe, reserving the strongest for [their] own slavery." Quite possibly the Florentines kept the process of enslavement so simple—nothing more than being made to put on a "red coate and a red cap"—because there was an English consul in Livorno, and English merchants walked the streets. Perhaps they simply thought it impolitic to sell a shipload of English sailors in the public market.

Davies divided his nearly nine years of bondage into two parts. In the beginning, he wrote, he was set to work "chained in a Cart like a horse," although "receiving more blowes than any Cart-horse in England." Together with 40 or 50 other cart-men, "from Sunne rising to Sunne set," he was made to haul "Sand, or Lyme, or Bricke, or some such like, and to draw it whither the Officers appointed us, for their buildings." The men were given as little to eat as any state slaves in Barbary—"our diet being Bread and Water, and not so much Bread in three daies as we might have eaten at once."

One of the buildings that Davies worked on must have been his own prison—the records indicate that soon after he arrived in Livorno construction was begun on the city's *Bagno dei forzati,* or Bath of the Convicts. The structure was also known by the identical name as slave pens in Algiers and Tunis, the *Bagno delle galere,* or Bath of the Galleys, for this was the prison dormitory of Florence's *galeotti.* Finished in 1602, the immense structure, right in the heart of Livorno, would house most of the thousands of galley slaves brought to the city by the Knights of St. Stephan. Eventually, lack of space and the desire to get some of the unsavory spectacle of chain gangs out of the city center persuaded later Grand Dukes to build another slave pen outside of town. Still, the original *Bagno dei forzati* was located too conveniently close to the port, where so many slaves worked, to be abandoned completely. It was used for slaves and for storage until well into the

19th century, and some crumbling remnants of it stood until Fascist times, when it was finally cleared away. In its place was erected Livorno's current city hall.

For three years Davies was kept in the construction gangs, pulling a cart or "carrying off durt and stone, and such like, in a basket," chained to a fellow slave. Sitting down on the job, as he found, risked having one of the overseers rush up to him, crying '"Thou Lutheran Dogge: Why workest thou not.[7]' and with that strake me with a cudgell." Then, one day in 1600, as he recalled, "we English-men were called, as many as were left alive." The Florentines (whom he judged from his perspective as a gang slave, to be "a ver)' deceitful people") announced that those who were still fit enough were to be sent to serve in the galleys of St. Stephan. As Davies wrote:

> Then did my miserie increase many-fold, for then 1 was made a Gally-slave to row at an Oare, where our former diet lessened, but blowes increased, to the losse of many of our lives. We were shaven Head and Beard ever)' eight or tenth day, being alwaies naked, but only a payre of linnen breeches and chaines continually.

Davies said that he rowed for seven years, though probably not continuously. Most of the Christian fleets stayed in port during the winter months, so ver)' likely he was actually at sea only about half that time. In the course of his bondage he traveled many times to Palermo and then set off to sail over much of the eastern Mediterranean. There, as Davies put it, "I was at the taking of many a Towne and Gaily of the Turkes." As on the Barbary galleys, living conditions were harsh and discipline was a brutal torment. If any of the slaves had offered the slightest resistance, he recalled, "we should presently have left our nose and cares and received one hundred blowes on our bare backe, and a hundred on our belly with a double rope or Buis pisle, continuing a slave still." Davies preferred not to linger further on the details of his experience, but he did sum up those seven years in one especially heartfelt sentence:

> The miserie of the Gallics doth surpasse any mans judgement or imagination, neyther would any man thinke that such torture or

Figure 11.1 "Turkish" slaves in Christian captivity. Courtesy of the Museo Correr, Venice.

> torment were used in the world, but onley they that feele it, the extreamitie of miserie causeth many a slave to kill themselves or else to seeke to kill their Officers.

Davies' experiences in bondage, the sufferings and emotions, were presumably shared by all the slaves in Livorno, though he never mentioned the Muslims who must have labored alongside him (see Figure 11.1). He was, perhaps, sensitive to their shared plight, both in Catholic bondage—he wrote that his forced participation in sacking Turkish towns and ships was "sore against my will." Mostly, however, he complained about his own misfortunes. What little he said about his fellow Englishmen tells us only how massively they died in captivity—after nine years' enslavement, 24 of the 37 British seamen taken in the *Franics of Saltash* had perished. When Davies finally won his release in 1604, two more were freed with him, "whereof tenne [others] continued in chaines," probably to die in their turn.

It is reasonable to conclude from Davies's account that a good many other English seamen captured by the Knights of St. Stephan were

condemned to slavery for life. Their only crime—since Florence was not at war with England—was being Protestant and having fallen, in ambiguous circumstances, into the hands of state and religious authorities who were highly motivated by the crusading passions of the Catholic Reformation. A very similar fate had befallen Richard Haselton a generation earlier, after he had shipwrecked—while serving as an Algerian galley slave—on the Genoese shores. Haselton's fate was not the chain gang, but rather the prisons of the Inquisition. Although tortured as a heretic, he was never enslaved—at least not until he escaped and blundered back into the hands of the Algerians.

As for Davies and the other British seamen held by the Florentines—there seems to have been no mechanism for these men to free themselves, and the English government did little or nothing to get them out. Her Majesty's ministers would have been careful not to imperil England's profitable trading arrangements with Livorno, one of the richest free ports in the Mediterranean. During his time in this slave limbo, Davies found that his only help came from private sources, in particular the generosity of Englishmen who had come to the city to trade, men he met while shuffling around Livorno's streets and port, chained to his fellow slaves. He recalled "finding in all this time much comfort and reliefe from English Merchants that were Protestants, and also from many English Masters and owners of Ships. But from English men being Papists [Catholics] none at all."

It was such an encounter that finally got him freed, when he met a sympathetic ship's master named Robert Thornton. About to lead an expedition to explore the Amazon delta in the name of Grand Duke Ferdinando, Captain Thornton needed a competent barber-surgeon to join his crew. Learning that Davies was trained in just such work, Thornton went directly to the Grand Duke and petitioned for Davies' release. The Grand Duke granted Davies provisional liberty to make the voyage, though only on payment of a hefty bond. Freed at last—primarily thanks to what the Italians would call *fortuna*—capricious fate—Davies was willing enough to continue serving his master, Duke Ferdinando, though now as a free man, earning a wage. Why not, he asked, with only a trace of bitterness, "in respect I spake the Italian tongue very perfectly, for 1 bought it deere with many a droppe of my blood, in the time of my slaverie."

CHAPTER 12

STATE SLAVES

Miguel de Cervantes, who was himself a slave in Algiers for five years, claimed that being a slave of the state was much worse than ending up in private hands. Those who were public slaves, he wrote, "Find it much more difficult to retake their freedom, because belonging to everyone and not having a specific master, even if they are able to pay their ransom, they cannot find anyone with whom to deal."[1] To be a slave of the state, and thus of no one, he might have added, also meant that no one concerned himself with your daily welfare, placed any limits on the grueling labor you were expected to do, or on the filthy, wretched, and degrading conditions in which you were forced to live. A (comparatively) lucky few might find a place in the household of the pasha or *(ley,* as secretary, musician, or catamite, but for the great majority who experienced it, state slavery meant falling into a twilight existence as non-persons.

This was also, not coincidentally, the most widely shared image that foreign travelers took away of Mediterranean slavery. Not the harem girl—so firmly locked away as to be accessible only in fantasies—but instead the slave gang, which could be encountered in all its brutal reality, in the streets of Algiers, Tunis, Seville, or Livorno. These groups of battered men, chained together in pairs or in a line, bowed under the weight of their irons and of exhaustion, shuffling their way from one bestial job to the next, struck many visitors with disgust, even fear. They offered the unwilling observer a glimpse, fleeting and pungent, into the workings of a brutal machine of exploitation, one designed to work its cogs the maximum at the minimum cost, before they gave out, broke, and were discarded.

In Barban', as we have seen, men and women were generally drafted into state bondage at the pasha or *dey's* palace, either initially, when the ruler took his allotted eighth, or after the first sale in the *badestan,* when the slaves were brought back to his residence for a second offer and new round of bidding. In this round, rulers would generally choose captives of quality or prestige, whose value, whether for work or for ransom, was obvious. In Algiers, as de La Motte observed, the *dey* would take:

> The best among them, *viz-* the [ship] Commanders or Masters, the Surgeons, the Carpenters, &.C., whom he sends away to the *Belie Bagnio.* He likewise takes authoritatively (or by his supreme Prerogative) such Persons as of are very great Consequence [for ransoming].

After skimming off the cream, the ruler or his agents debated over pulling out robust, younger men, those best able to tolerate the rigors of work in the galleys or in construction. He checked out their teeth, "to make sure they would be able to chew the ship's biscuit." He might also feel the strength of their arm and leg muscles, and have his guards "make them march, run, [and] jump, to judge the elasticity of their limbs." Those he selected were then herded off "like pigs to the market" by the admiral of the fleet or one of his lackeys, taken to one of the city's slave pens, or *bagnos.* Here they would be held, usually in company with slaves belonging to other shipowners, until the time came for the fleet to set out on the corso. Emanuel d'Aranda, one of those lucky enough to be left behind, described the preparations the others went through:

> The slaves who were with us made what provisions they could in order to their going to Sea. There was distributed by the *Bassa's* [Pasha's] order to every slave five Ells [about six yards] of coarse cloath, to make a Shirt and a pair of Drawers, such as are worn in the Gallies ... The day the slaves were to go aboard, there came into our Stables five or six young Lads, Apprentices to Barbers, who began to shave their heads and beards, who were to row in the galleys. When they were all shaven and fitted, the Captain of the Galley and the Bassa's Steward came into the Stable, and having brought all the slaves of that place into a Court or Garden, they begin to distribute the offices and places they were to

> have in the rowing ... The *Bassa's* Galley went out the same day, accompany'd by three other Gallics.[2]

What awaited those chosen for rowing was far from pleasant. The lot of the *galeotti* has been called "a real, living hell for those poor wretches," an experience that combined fatigue, discomfort, and danger to an almost unimaginably high degree. Even those who had seen the roughest that life had to offer around the Mediterranean—including slave life—agreed that nothing quite equaled galley slavery. Joseph Morgan summed it up as well as anyone, reminding his readers that:

> Those who have not seen a Galley at Sea ... cannot well conceive the Shock such a Spectacle must give to a Heart capable of the least Tincture of Commiseration. To behold Ranks and Files of half-naked, half-starved, half-tanned, meager Wretches, chained to a Plank, from whence they remove not for Months together ... urged on, even beyond human Strength, with cruel and repeated Blows, on the bare Flesh, to an incessant Continuation of the most violent of all *Exercises.*[3]

Morgan was denouncing the treatment of European, Christian *galeotti,* hut he knew about the other side to the coin. Writing in the 1730s, he stressed how "I have heard dismal Accounts, as well, from *Turks* and Moors, who have experienced it among the *Christians,"* since "The Gallies of *France, Spain, Venice, Genoa, Malta, Naples, Sicily,* &c., are well known to swarm with *Turks, Moors,* &c., chained to the Oar." Morgan held that the only Christian power that treated its slave rowers with anything like what he called "tolerable Humanity" was Tuscany—that is, ironically enough, those same Knights of St. Stephen who had so abused William Davies a century and a half earlier. Morgan summed up the treatment of Muslim slaves with a story that was told to him "for a Certainty by some Persons of Credit, who knew the Party." It concerned a Moorish slave rowing on a Spanish galley, where:

> Grown quite desperate at the infernal Usage he met with at the Oar, and without Hopes of Release, or Mitigation, [he] chopped off his Left Hand above the Wrist; as imagining that the Work imposed on him, in that mutilated Condition, would be somewhat more adequate to his Strength. But before the Wound was half

> cured, he was chained by the Stump, forced to tug at the Oar as formerly, and used ten times worse than ever.

None of this should come as any surprise. From the 16th until well into the 18th century navies on both sides of the Mediterranean used and brutalized slave labor as essential to the rowed galley on which they all depended. In the centuries before sail came to dominate, enormous numbers of oarsmen were needed to keep a fleet in motion. The Battle of Lepanto in 1571, the largest encounter between galleys since ancient times, involved around 425 war galleys and scores of other vessels, all powered by an estimated 80,000 rowers (of whom at least 12,000 went down with their ships). As we have seen, Lepanto represented an apex in big fleet activity in the Mediterranean—thereafter both Hapsburg and Ottoman navies were reduced and largely kept to their own ends of this vast amphitheater. Nevertheless, even in the relative peace that followed, at least 20,000 oarsmen were needed on a regular basis to power all the galleys that still prowled the Mediterranean and, increasingly, the Atlantic waters, ranging from the light fuste and *tartane of* the Salé rovers, to the xebecs and galeots of the Barbar)' corsairs, and the great war galleys of the French and Venetians, the Papal States, and the Knights of Malta and St. Stephan.

What kind of men who did this rowing varied from state to state, though not as much as one might expect. All the Christian powers depended to a greater or lesser extent on a core of slave oarsmen—perhaps one-third to one-half of the total, to which were added a certain percentage of convicts (called *forzati,* or *formats)* and paid volunteers *(biionavoglie).* Even the French and Venetians, who supposedly had treaties with the Sultan forbidding them from enslaving Muslim *galeotti,* still managed to slip a few *turchi* into their crews. As William Davies found out, some Catholic powers were also happy to turn Protestant seamen into slaves. The Ottomans initially filled the benches of the Imperial fleet by levying regular drafts of able-bodied Turks in Anatolia, but over time it became possible for villages to buy their way out of this obligation by paying a tax. Increasingly, the sultan had to fill his galley benches with slaves. As long as they were available, Christian slaves were seen by many Turks as superior to conscripted peasants, just as many Christians believed that Turkish slaves made better rowers than either the *biionavoglie or* the convicts (who were more prone to

/ xZX

mutiny). Both the Salé rovers and in particular the Barbary corsairs depended almost totally on slave oarsmen, and for this reason their galleys were seen as the best powered, and "many have esteemed them to be the greatest sinew and force of the Turkish armada.'"

Regardless of whose vessel they rowed, the overall experience of *galeotti was* remarkably similar—and uniformly bad. Several factors combined to create the brutal conditions to which these men were subjected. Their work was appallingly hard. Galleys, especially the larger ones with several masts, were outfitted with enormous oars, typically around 25 feet long and weighing several hundred pounds. Each of them, as one slave noted, was "work enough for six of us to tug at." Big galleys, like those of the Turkish or Algerian captain pasha, or the Knights of Malta, had 30 or more of great oars on each side—an immense amount of lumber that had to be handled with exquisite finesse by upwards of 350 men. Even the smaller and more commonplace galleys and xebecs that carried 18 to 26 oars per side still required a densely packed mob of *galeotti,* crowded virtually on top of each other in the ship's open well (see Figure 12.1).[6]

Those who designed these vessels were concerned only with how to best exploit the rowers' muscle power, and not with their comfort. On Mascarenhas's galley, "the slaves [were] seated at an angle, on a bench of four palms width [a little over a foot], without being able to turn about." To pull such large oars, the men had to use their whole bodies, standing up on the fore stroke and then pulling with their legs and back, returning to their bench while they dragged their oar-blades through the water. To keep so many men in their places and (above all) to keep them from mutiny, they were all chained. In Italian galleys the slaves and convicts were known collectively as the *gente di catena,* the people of the chain, and often they were bolted down, both to their oar, by means of wrist shackles, and to one of two long chains that ran the length of the ship, between their legs. Movement about the galley was consequently impossible. As Thomas Saunders recalled:

> We were cheaned three and three to an oare, and we rowed naked above the girdle ... we were then also vilely manackled, in such sort that we could not put our handes the length of a foote asunder the one from the other, and every night they searched our chaines three times, to see if they were fast reaucted.[7]

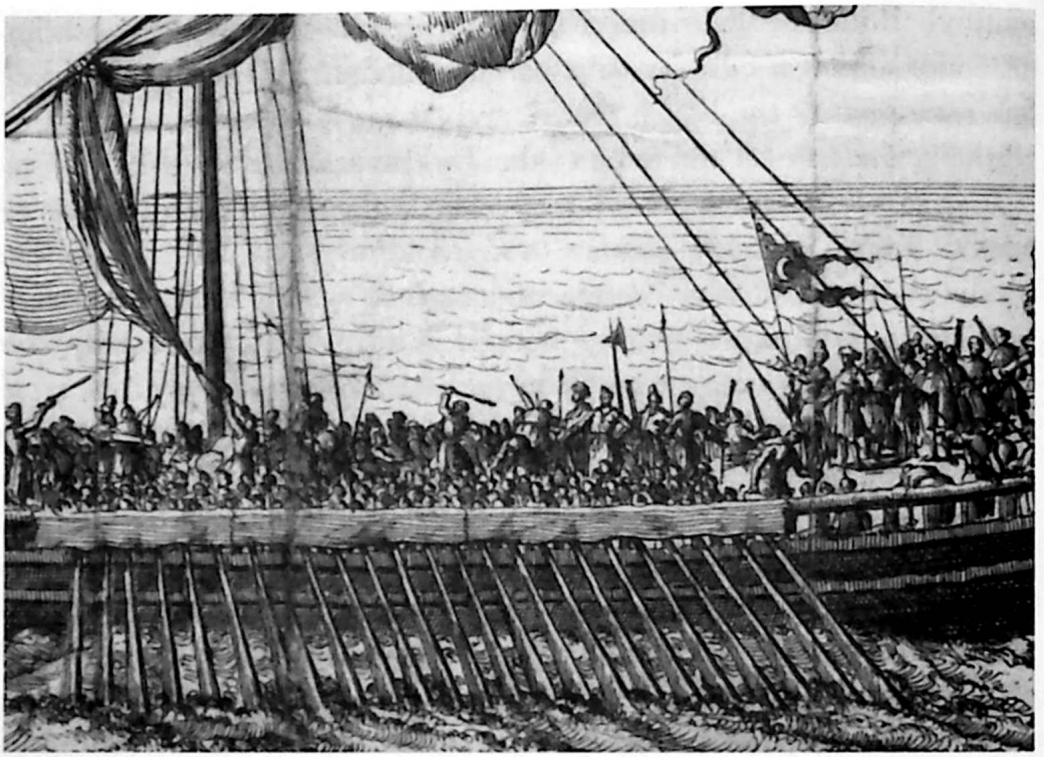


Figure 12.1 Slave oarsmen in an Algerian galley. Pierre Dan, *Historic van Barbaryen* en *des zelfs Zee-Roovers* (Amsterdam, 1684).

Such heavy shackling may have reduced the threat of mutiny or escape—though some slaves reportedly grew so skinny on their meager rations that they managed to get away by slipping their feet and hands out of the iron bands. It also made life especially miserable for the rowers. When men needed to relieve themselves, they had to get unlocked from their oar and crawl over their companions to get to the *borda,* the opening in the hull for their oar. It was to facilitate this, as Louis Marot noted, "that the [leg] Chain is as long as the Bench." Marot also recalled that, "the only liberty that is given us in the Galley is to go to this place when we have occasion," but it was not always granted or even requested.[8] Many a slave was too exhausted to ask and simply befouled himself where he sat. It was the horrible stench of a galley, whether Muslim or Christian, that most impressed those who happened to get downwind of them—one could smell the *galeotti* long before seeing them.

Chained in place, clad in only "a short linnen paire of breeches to cover their privities," the half naked *galeotti were* left exposed to the

elements, shivering in the chill of passing rain and so exposed to the sun in the hot summer months that, as Knight put it, "their flesh is burned off their backes." Still more troublesome for the rowers was knowing that "if [their galley] capsizes—as happens every day—none of them can thus get out alive." It was evidently not at all unusual for the officers, crew, and soldiers to abandon their slaves in a sinking ship, taking off in small boats and leaving the *galeotti,* still bolted to their oars and leg chains, to slowly drown, screaming in fear, as the vessel went down.[9]

Even with five or six men on an oar, powering a galley was extremely grueling work, especially when "for many and many a League upon a Stretch, the miserable Tuggers [are] urged forward, unintermittingly." Some *re'is* held to the rule that, in the normal course of things, the *galeotti* were meant to row "up to a maximum of twenty hours at a stretch without any break." Under abnormal circumstances, of course, things could get much worse. When the ship was in a chase, the *galeotti* might be forced to row flat out "for whole Days and Nights successively." Then, wrote Mascarenhas:

> Behold, a trial that only the demons of Hell could withstand. I have seen some men who, after this, fell exhausted on the oar and others who died under the whip, without the Turks having the least pity for them. Much to the contrary, they were more and more cruel, lashing [at them] more and more.[10]

Beating and mistreatment were regular features of *galeotto* life, on both Christian and Muslim ships. In the larger galleys a gangway ran up the center of the vessel, between and somewhat higher than the benches on either side. Along it, the bosun and his mates scurried fore and aft, "when their divellish choller rose," lashing at the naked backs of the hapless oarsmen below them. Their preferred instrument for this was the dried, stretched bull's penis, "a Bulls pizel," but they were also willing to beat the rowers with tarred, knotted ropes or with sticks. Mascarenhas described their usual routine on his ship, how "under the least pretext":

> They would employ the *Escurribanda,* which consists of their rushing down the walkway and beating ten or twelve times the naked back of each [galeotto] with a tarred, knotted cord, and they deal

> with the two hundred and fifty Christians on a galley one after the other, without anyone escaping.[11]

It was the arbitrary nature of the violence that so thoroughly broke the spirit of the *galeotti,* turning them from men into unresisting animals. As Francis Knight put it, the slaves "are beaten to put on their clothes and beaten to take them off; they are beaten to [make them] eate, drinke, sleepe, and wash, and are beaten for doing any of these." There seemed to he no limit to this incessant lashing and whipping. Before departing for the *corso,* the *re'is of* Mascarenhas's galley supplied his petty officers with 50 "big sticks" specifically to discipline his *galeotti,* but he sorely underestimated the extent of their cruelty. After just 15 days, Mascarenhas reported, "only one of the sticks was left, all the rest having been broken on the hacks of the captives. Thereafter, they were whipped with a tarred rope."[12]

On both sides of the Mediterranean, slave oarsmen were poorly fed, considering the amount of work they were expected to do. The earliest account we have of their rations, from the 1580s, claimed that each day those in Algerian galleys were given "no more than a bit of bread crumbs, two or three pieces of dirty and often rotten biscuit ... a little diluted vinegar." Forty years later, Mascarenhas complained of getting "two handfuls of black biscuit a day, nothing more." Even water was in short supply for the *galeotti,* despite their having to work exposed to the sun. Knight wrote how, when becalmed and half crazed with thirst, "for a drop of water they would pawne their soules, and often are constrained to drinke of the Salt Oceans."[13]

Things were slightly better on the galleys of some Christian powers. At about the time Mascarenhas was lamenting his two handfuls of black bread, Muslim slaves rowing for the Papal States—there were about 300 of them—were supposedly getting nearly two pounds of ship's biscuit and "a soup of rice and beans for everybody." A century later, both Christian and Muslim galleys were offering their rowers somewhat better fare, rations that were more for nourishment than for punishment. Morgan reported how the *galeotti of* Algiers were provided with not only a "scarce-sufficient Quantity of Rusk," but also the occasional "Mess of Gruel of their coarsest *Burgol* [bulgur] moistened with a little Vinegar more than half Water, with a few Spots of Oil swimming thereon." In the papal galleys, by comparison, there was a

positive feast, at least in theory: three pounds of bread a day, a pint of wine, a half pint of vinegar, and a rotation of soups or pottage (and even some fresh meat) each day throughout the week.[14]

Although their rations were probably never adequate for the work expected of them—those who saw them always described *galeotti* as emaciated—the deprivation most keenly felt by rowers was lack of sleep, that they were "never to lye in a bed." As Knight recalled, "their sleepe, when they have any, is an houre in twelve, and that at night, when the one halfe Roaes and the other slumbers." It was difficult enough to sleep on such occasions, while those just fore and aft were continually standing and heaving at their oars. On the smaller galeots, with three men to a bench, it was possible to divide up the scant space, with one man left to sleep on the crossed oars, but on the big galleys, five or six men had simply no place to put themselves, "their pillow the banke upright, and that dubble, not having so much roome as to stretch their legges." It was the lack of sleep, according to Knight, along with their clandestine sipping of seawater, that drove many *galeotti* into "continuall extasies"—the raving madness that proceeded death.[15]

Francis Knight was among the more experienced of the *galeotti* who left accounts of their time at sea, having gone out on the *corso* several times in the late 1630s. Like many of those who pulled the oar, his time at sea came fairly late in his captivity, after he had passed through the hands of several owners, working his way down in the hierarchy of slaves until he fell into the hands of the state and reached what he, and all those who had to endure it, regarded as the bottom rung of slaver)'. As he recalled:

> As there is no Calamatie can befall a man in this life which hath the least parallell to this of Captivitie, neither are the indurances of Captives equal!, although the least without divine assistance were insupportable. Yet are they all easie in Comparison to that of the Gallies, which is the most inhumane and diabollicall ... alas, such are their ditraments, as causeth [slaves! to curse the day of their Nativities, and the parents that engendered them, and if it were to dye to curse God himselfe.

Outsiders who came in contact with the galley slaves also saw their condition as both extreme and yet also somehow exemplary of

Mediterranean slavery more generally. They would have agreed with Mascarenhas' judgement that "According to the captives in Algiers, if one has not been a *galeotto,* he could not say that he has been a slave. And this is quite true." Of course, the rowers were for the most part locked away in their hellish existence, far from the eyes of most European consuls, merchants, or emissaries. Only a few observers ever got a good look inside this closed and crowded world.

One of these was Padre Marcello Costa, papal missionary to Tripoli and then Tunis in the 1670s. Christian missionizing was an altogether different business in Muslim lands than elsewhere in the Early Modem world, since converting, or even attempting to convert, a Muslim to Christianity was punishable in extremely unpleasant ways. Missionaries not wanting to court martyrdom necessarily directed their evangelical energies in other directions. Some tried to convert the Protestants and Orthodox Christians living in Islamic lands, but most concentrated on giving spiritual comfort to Catholic slaves. This was Father Costa's great preoccupation, and his missionary ambitions led him to leave the (comparative) comforts of the missionary quarters in Tunis and go looking for Catholics to care for outside the city. He found plenty of them among those slaves who had been sent to the mountains to make charcoal or cut timber, those who worked in the quarries, and those who built ships in the regime's two port cities of Bizerte and Porto Farina.

Bizerte, where 200 or 300 of these shipbuilding slaves lived, more or less permanently, was also the home base of the Tunisian fleet. Though it was 60 miles away from Tunis proper, Father Costa went there every few months, "traveling alone with a simple Moor who carries me on his horse." His road was infested with "Arab assassins" who occasionally took pot shots at him, but he ran those risks anyway, so he could be at the port when Tunis' fleet came and went. Costa's concern was with "those six pitiless galleys," as he called them, or rather with the 1,500 Christians who had to row in them. Many of these *galeotti* were so fatalistic about their chances of ever returning from the *corso* that they made up their wills before setting off. Father Costa, on the other hand, was there to help them settle their spiritual affairs. There were, of course, no Catholic masses held aboard ship when they were at sea, nor any service for the dead. It was commonly believed by the Christians that "anyone of these unhappy [slaves! who succumbed to the work and

dropped from weakness was nothing more than useless weight: he was immediately thrown into the sea, whether he was dead or alive, and replaced on his bench." To die outside their religion terrified many slaves: "For the Holy Souls of Purgatory'," they begged anyone who would listen, "do not let me die in despair within the Galleys!"[16]

In Father Costa's eyes, a slave's main weapons against such despair were communion, confession, and absolution, and he set about administering the sacraments to every' slave he could reach. It was a massive and difficult job, though, if only because many *galeotti* had been at the oar for so long they had forgotten the words of the rites and even the dogma behind them. Forbidden from preaching and saying mass on the galleys even when they were in harbor, he had to visit each of the five *bagnos* in Bizerte, slave pens that were in some cases quite literally pens. One of them was of the type known as a *mattamoro,* an underground pit; another Father Costa referred to as a *stallaccia,* a "miserable stable," measuring 30 feet on a side. To say the mass in such places, he had to spend the night, locked inside:

> [With] a hundred or more Christians, and for the tightness of the place, they had to stay one on top of the other, and only with difficulty could one breathe, and in one comer of this wretched place, I had an altar erected, and for there not being a window there, nor a breath [of airj, and with the door closed, such is the stink that sometimes it caused [people) to faint; to say nothing of the quantity of dung of every sort of animal.[17]

Even in such conditions, Costa recounted, he managed to sing litanies and orations, give a sermon, and confess the men until after midnight. A few hours before dawn, he started up the process again, saying a mass, giving communion, and confessing as many slaves as he could before they were all herded off by their keepers, to start the day's work, at the harbor or in the shipyards. Such was his success in these inauspicious circumstances that, according to Giovanni Levacher, his superior in Tunis, he even "received the abjuration of various German, Dutch, and Swedish heretics, who, having known the truth, have embraced our Holy Faith."[18]

This was Father Costa's regular routine when the fleet was in port, and, as he put it, "it was necessary for me to sleep almost every night,

now in one *bagno, now* in another." As the galleys were getting ready to depart, he had another job to do—trying to make sure that slave priests (there might he several dozen in Bizerte and Porto Farina) were not taken from the *bagrtos* and sent to sea with the rest of the *galeotti.* Though these men were mostly unfit for the strenuous work of rowing, they might get sent out anyway—"put to the oar with incredible contempt," often over Costa's strenuous objections. The reason, he had to admit, was that word got back to the Tunisians that "our own Christians put to the oar their sherifs, marabouts, and cadis [i.e., Muslim religious leaders and judges] that they hold as slaves in Christendom." Maliciousness on one side of the Mediterranean had a way of breeding its own retribution on the other.

Father Costa also tried to be in port when the galleys came back, after their usual *corso of* 30 or 40 days. He did so, he said, partly to be on hand to greet the returning oarsmen, but mostly so he could minister spiritually to the inevitable crop of those who failed to make it through the rigors of the trip. "I will always carry' holy oil [for administering extreme unction] with me," he said, "because a great number of the crew, on their return here, are gravely sick, and for their many sufferings and beatings many of them die."

At least the *galeotti of* the Tunis fleet got to leave their vessels and come ashore—"for although they worke hard all day on land, yet they rest at night, and enjoy their fills of water (which is precious in the Gallies)." It was another story when allied fleets, such as the Algerians or the Imperial navy, stopped over in Bizerte. One such occasion was in July of 1675, when a new pasha came from Constantinople with the Levantine galleys. Father Costa found himself confronted with several hundred men in need of confessing, men the captain would only let come ashore at the rate of "sometimes ten, sometimes fifteen a day, with a Turk guarding them and all in chains." It also turned out that each *galeotto* had been required to pay his overseer to be brought ashore—only two aspers, but "so many of these little poor ones [poverelli] did not have anything to pay their guard." So, as Father Costa told the story:

> [I] sent word inside the galley, that for whoever would not have the ability to pay the guard, 1 would pay him—as happened with many and many, 1 made the charity ... 1 confessed them all in

> fifteen days, but what confessions they were! Some of them I found of thirty years [since the last confession] and the greater part of six, eight and ten years. Oh, God! I asked them the cause of such neglect, and the poor dears responded to me that in the Levant they do not keep bagnos, and being always on the galley, with no priest ever going to confess them, and not having anything to pay to the guards, they would never let them set foot on shore.[19]

Sleeping, eating, and praying in such unsanitary conditions, with so many starving and unhealthy *galeotti, was* a risky practice. Missionaries died all the time from taking such chances, catching the diseases that swept through the galleys and slave pens. It was, for many of them, a kind of martyrdom for their mission, and it was probably also the fate of Padre Costa. In his last letter that survives, he wrote to Rome, on April 10, 1676, asking the missionary society to send more priests to Tunis. Thanks to the plague, which was then raging in the *bagnos,* he wrote, “the sick are dying every Day like flies.” He was especially incensed about the sorry state of the many Christians held "in various parts of the country-side, [who] are dying without the sacraments because there not [enough] priests.” Probably the plague eventually took Costa too; it was highly contagious and often fatal, and afterwards there were no more messages from him out of Barbary-.[20]

Lodging the *galeotti* when they were ashore presented the state with problems of both logistics and security. No longer constrained by the tight discipline imposed by the dynamics of the galley, the men still had to be controlled and, as much as possible, profitably put to work. The obvious solution was some kind of prison, and by degrees the authorities in many towns came around to this decision. Often the initial effort involved converting some existing structure into an ad hoc slave pen that in time became semi-permanent—a disused grain cellar, for example, or the *stallaccia* that Father Costa visited in Bizerte. One good candidate in the Ottoman world for such a conversion was the bath house *(hammam* in Turkish), with its limited entrances, high ceilings, and thick walls. Tradition held that the first slave pens in Constantinople were set up in several of these *hammam,* hastily turned into prisons in the early 16th century- to accommodate the flood of new slaves brought into the city by the Turkish conquest in Greece. Whether or not the story- was true, the Europeans took it up, and throughout the next three centuries such establishments were variably

Figure 12.2 Late 19th-century photo of a slave *bagno* in Tunis.

known as *bains, banhos, baños, bagni,* or baths, whether they were found in Muslim or in Christian cities.

The earliest of these "gloomy mansion[s] of horror and despair" in Algiers was up and running by 1531, soon after the great Kheir-ed-din Barbarosa had taken over the city. It was known as the Bagno Beylis—Prison of the State Slaves—and could hold upwards of 2,000 captives, with "the rest being dispersed in the City, or at the Farm and Pleasure-houses."[21] By the mid-17th century, *bagnos* had sprung up all over Barbary—there were eight in Algiers, 15 in Tunis, five in Tripoli (see Figure 12.2). In Christendom it was much the same story—the Knights of Malta had three *bagnos for* Muslim slaves in Valetta and its suburbs; in Livorno, the Knights of St. Stephan operated at least two. Many of these later *bagnos,* at least in Barbary, were established by private individuals. Wealthy corsair princes—like the famed Ali Pegelin, who personally owned 500 to 800 slaves—needed somewhere to put their chattel, and rather than rent space for them in the state *bagno,* they found it more economical to build their own pens.

Some of these private *bagrios were* evidently rather slapdash affairs, really nothing more than a few adjoining houses connected together or a converted warehouse. The state *bagnos,* on the other hand, were grand structures for their time and place, thrust down in the middle of the crowded city, often just a short distance from the *badestan* where the slaves were sold in the first place. The Bagno Beyli$, the largest in Algiers, supposedly measured about 90 by 35 meters. The surviving floor plan of the Bagno of Kam Ahmed, in Tunis, shows a structure almost as big—about 160 feet on a side, or something over 25,000 square feet on the ground floor alone (see Figure 12.3). In Barbary, the larger *bagnos were* built like traditional caravansaries, with several stories of cells opening onto balconies surrounding one or more courtyards. "The roof," observed d'Aranda, "is flat, with a Terrace, after the Spanish mode ... [covering] a spacious Vault, that receiv'd its Light, such as it was, through a certain Grate that was above, but so little, that at mid-day ... there was a necessity of setting up Lamps." Pierre Dan provided another view of the interior of the state *bagnos* in Algiers:

> These Bagnos are rather great houses, where there are a great many little rooms, very low and somber, all vaulted. In each are confined fifteen or sixteen slaves, sleeping on the bare floor, if they do not have the means to buy some palm mats. They do not have any covers except their poor rags, in which all sorts of vermin persecute them." ''

Those who lived in the *bagrios*—or simply had a look inside—agreed that they were noisome, mephitic, downright scary places. De La Motte complained that the Bagno BeyliQ in Algiers was "extremely incommodious, by reason of the Stench arising from such Numbers of Slaves as were there lodged, upwards of 2000, they were." Visiting the slave pens of Algiers seems to have especially disturbed the normally imperturbable French ambassador D'Avrieux, who denounced these:

> Vast houses where they put the Slaves during the night. They are frightful prisons where these poor people are practically piled up, with one lodging on top of the other. These are places of horror, where the smoke of cooking [fires] transpires on every side, [where! noise, shouts, blows, and tumult reign everywhere.[23]

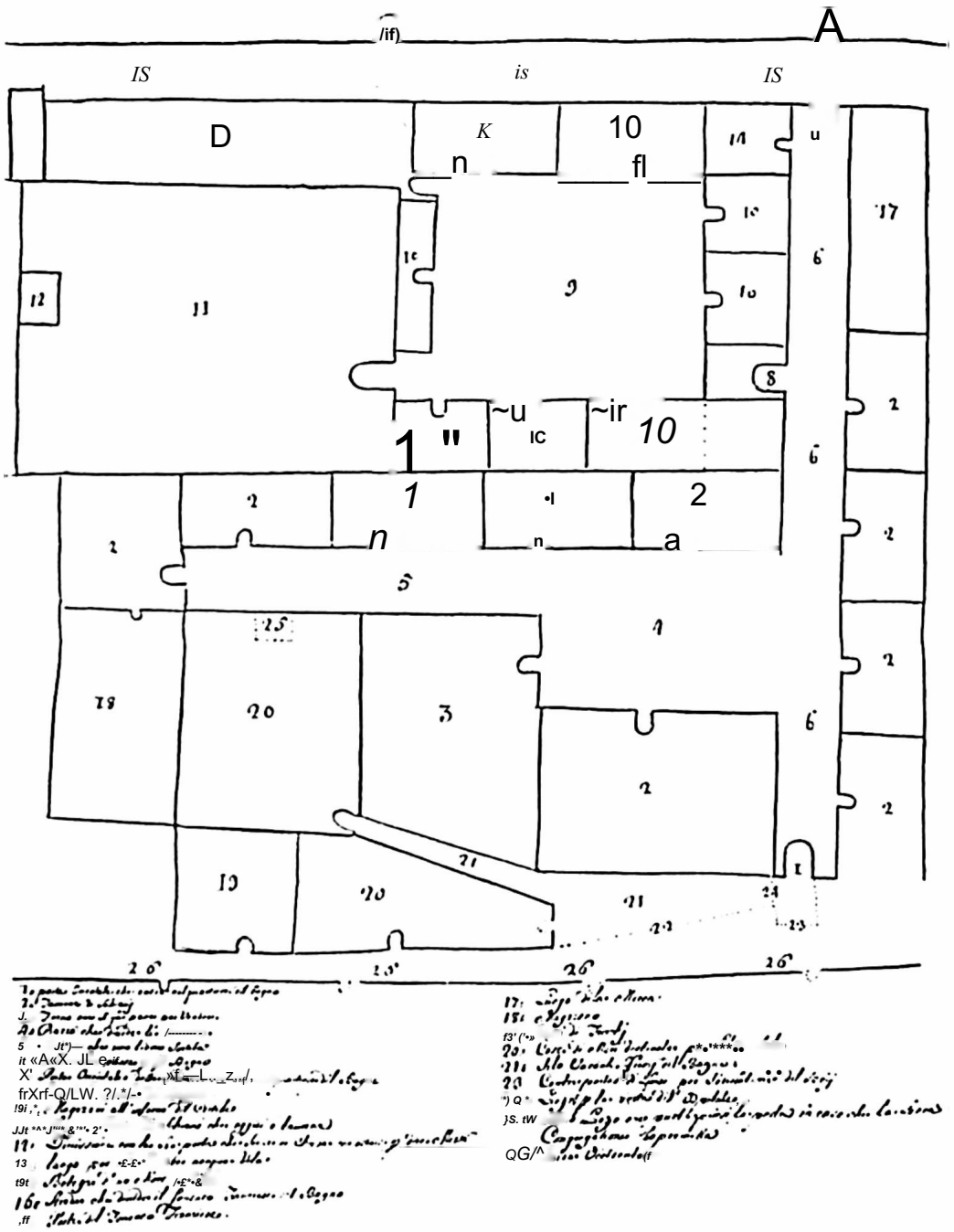


Figure 12.3 Floor plan of Kara Ahmed *bagno* in Tunis (rooms marked 2 and 11 were taverns; room marked 13 housed a distillery). Courtesy of Archivio Storico della Congregazione "De Propaganda Fide."

State slaves in Barbary customarily got no sustenance at all while in the *bagno*—just water to drink and the stones of the terrace or open courtyard on which to sleep, “having neither bed nor bedding, except [a] blanket." They got food only when they were at work—10 ounces

or so of “black bread so sour that the dogs themselves refused to eat it.” They were given, upon their arrival, some minimal clothing, which also had to serve them as bedding. Initially this was a very sparse outfit indeed: In the 1620s, it amounted to no more "than a burnous with a hood, once only at the beginning [of one’s slavery], and one pair of canvas drawers per year.” A century later, the allotment had improved somewhat, though not much. As Venture du Paradis wrote in the 1720s:

> When a slave is brought to Algiers, he is given a coarse shirt, a corset of coarse fabric, a culotte and a little caftan of the same material, that descends on him to the knees, a red cap, a pair of shoes and a little wool blanket that he must always conserve. As to his clothes, they are renewed for him every year.[24]

In Barbary’, state slaves had to pay for every' other form of comfort or nourishment. Not even the rough clothes issued them were necessarily free. John Foss reported how, soon after they received their yearly clothing issue, the Algerian state slaves were sent out into the country' for some especially rough labor, and how “This day’s work, they tell us (by way of derision) is to pay for our suit of cloathes which we received a week before, and which by this time is generally half worn out.” A space in one of the “many little rooms” was also charged out “for a certain sum of money every moon.” Otherwise, Foss noted, slaves had to “sleep in the open Bagnio, where they have nothing but the firmament to cover them.” Anyone found occupying a room that he was unable to pay for was beaten and shackled in a pillory' every night until he somehow came up with the money he owed.[25]

It may seem somewhat sadistic to expect that slaves, who almost by definition owned nothing, should have to purchase even the necessities of life, but the practice was almost universal among Muslim slave holders. It can also be found in more than a few Christian slaving societies, and seems to be based on the premise that state slaves existed fundamentally to serve as *galeotti,* and consequently the state authorities had no obligation to take care of them—beyond preventing their escape—when they were not at the oar. Such attitudes were reflected in the practice of charging galley slaves, both Christian and Muslim, for leaving their ship. Father Costa reported how *galeotti,* simply seeking to go ashore for the brief time necessary for confession were charged for the privilege. In the Christian states, especially where there were no *bagnos, galeotti were* allowed to buy their way off the

benches for longer periods. The Papal fleet, which wintered in Civitavecchia, allowed Muslim rowers who could afford to pay a regular sum to move ashore during the colder months. These men customarily built themselves *baracche,* or huts, on the edge of town and set up small businesses selling tobacco or contraband goods. Typically they made just enough profit to come up with the monthly debt they owed the naval administrators for their shore leave.

As long as they could come up with their shore money, Muslim *galeotti* in cities like Civitavecchia or Valetta had a freedom of action similar to that enjoyed by privately owned slaves in Barbary—slaves like William Okeley, who also operated their own shops. Most state slaves in North Africa were held in the squalid and crowded *bagnos,* however. How did they manage to pay for even the barest necessities? Many obviously could not. In 1813, late in the story of Algerian slavery, when things had supposedly improved somewhat, Filippo Pananti could still claim that, "It is usual for one and two hundred slaves to drop off in a year, for want of food, medical attendance, and other necessities." He recalled meeting such men at the end of their tether, during his own time in Algiers. He wrote of walking on the edge of town:

> One evening towards dark, (when) I was called to by a hoarse voice: on drawing nearer, 1 beheld an unhappy being stretched on the ground ... sorrowfully seated under an old wall: at his feet there lay an immense load, under which he seemed to have sunk; his visage was pallid and meagre; with looks full of wildness and eyes fixed on the ground, all expressing strong signs of premature age; raising his head ... in a faint voice [he spoke) "Christian! Christian! ... For Heaven's sake have pity on my sufferings and terminate an existence which I can no longer support!"[26]

Yet, even as some slaves crumpled under the demands imposed on them, others managed to thrive, or at least survive. The *bagno* and state slavery offered certain possibilities, fleeting and hard to grasp, but available for those few who knew how to exploit them. Almost 200 years before Pananti, Emanuel d'Aranda sketched the parameters of the *bagno* system as he understood them:

> We were there five hundred and fifty Christian Slaves, all belonging to our Patron, *Alli Pelegin;* yet he did not allow any one of this great number ought towards his sustenance. The only comfort we

> had was that we had three hours every day allow'd us to shift for our Livelihood; so that every one was to make the best advantage he could of his industry.[27]

To those daily three hours d'Aranda might also have added half a dozen Christian and Muslim holidays observed every year. Moreover, in some locales at least, the Muslim day of rest on Friday afternoon was respected: "they hoist a green flag" and the slaves were sent back from work early, though often without any evening bread. These were the times when "it is allowed to the slaves to go about the city, and they do not survive if not with what they scrounge with their own efforts." Foss described how some of the slaves "are mechanics and work at their trades in the night"; and D'Aranda noted how "some employ'd themselves in footing [darningl stockings." A few, he went on, made toys out of scraps of wood or cloth and sold them to local children as Ramadan gifts; others hired themselves out as secretaries, to write letters home for slaves who were illiterate; still others "got their livelihood by some kind of Games"—gambling, presumably.[28]

Many learned to make use of skills they had not been taught at home. As d'Aranda stressed, "the profession most us'd was stealing. Every night there was publickly sold what ever had been stolen the night before." He wrote of one Italian slave, whom he called "a old Fox," who every' night brought in "a great burthern of Woolen and Linnen cloathes, Shirts, Brass-pots, and other pieces of household stuff," which he then hawked about the bagno courtyard, crying *"Arrache, Arrache!* [What am I bid? What am I bid!]" Though some did well enough at it, thievery was not for the faint of heart. D'Aranda had to admit that he "had not confidence and subtilty enough to steal, for that profession requires practice, especially in a place where there are so many thieves, and consequently people are more distrustful." Those caught stealing risked a beating and sometimes more—John Foss claimed that thieves "often hazard their lives by so doing." Still, D'Arvieux was probably only reflecting the common perception when he wrote that:

> One is persuaded that all the Christian slaves are thieves by profession. Necessity forces them to it, bad examples train them in it, and when they come to think that they themselves were

> [originally] stolen by the Turks, it easily puts it in their head that they should serve them up something similar.'[29]

Perhaps the only occupation more admired than thieving, among those who counted themselves successful *bagno* slaves, was that of tavern operator. Certainly it could pay better, though to set up for business one had to hand out hefty bribes and rental fees to the *guardian pasha,* the Turk who ran the establishment, and regular, heavy taxes to the *dey.* The attraction of tavern keeping is attested by the sheer number of them open for business in the *bagnos of* Algiers and Tunis. The schematic of the ground floor of the Bagno of Kara Ahmed in Tunis shows what we might call a multi-use structure—we find various shops and storerooms *(magazzini),* a Christian chapel, and a hospital for the slaves. Mostly, however, the *bagno* was a place of taverns—there were around a dozen of them, big and small, in just this one locale. Most of these establishments seem to have been fairly squalid. As De La Motte commented:

> The Taverns are no other than Vaults and Magazines, without any other Light than what enters at the Doors: Some are larger than others, but all of them very nasty; therein are placed their Butts of Wine, their Beds, and two or three Tables. Thither resort, to drink promiscuously, *Turks* and Moors, as well as *Christians.*[50]

Though they had a rather sleazy reputation, these taverns at least allowed their owners to earn a decent living. De La Motte wrote of some tavern keepers clearing "seven or eight hundred Pieces of Eight" a year after expenses, which was a comfortable income even for a free man, not to mention a slave. D'Arvieux suggested that these tavern keepers could be "compared to the life and trade of our own *Formats* on the Galleys," who were allowed run shops on shore, selling tobacco and other notions.[31] Yet this overlooks the wider function that these *bagno* taverns served in Barbary. They were a peculiar feature in the North African regencies, the product of tensions inherent in the Ottoman world. Turkish soldiers—to say nothing of renegade Christians—had a traditional fondness for drink, an inconvenient custom in societies where respectable and pious Muslims abhorred alcohol. Slave taverns, operated inside the (literally and figuratively) gray zone of the

bagnos, offered a way around this social and doctrinal problem. Besides serving as lockups for state slaves, the *bagnos* in Barbary offered the venue for an alternate, shadow society, "open, for all to enter, till the Evening," as Morgan noted. Groups supposedly at odds with each other—slaves and Jews came to the taverns as well—could socialize without exciting comment. If they got too drunk and rowdy—well, any fighting and shouting would hardly be noticed in the constant chaos of the slave pens.

The taverns also provided a convenient outlet for pirated wine, which the corsairs seized in huge quantities on the Christian ships they captured. Since the *dey* and the guardian pasha of the various *bagnos* strictly regulated the price at which such wine could be sold, the only competitive advantages one tavern might have over the others were free food and a higher quality of wine on offer. The workings of this marketplace was noted by d'Aranda, who wrote how "there was good Sack [sherry] brought in from the last prize which the *Turks* had taken, whence it came that our Bath was every day full of drunken Turks and *Christian* slaves who were Renegadoes." There might be stronger stuff available too: In the Bagno of Kara Ahmed arak and aquavit were made right on the spot, in a large distillery in one corner of the bagno.[32]

The heyday of the *galeotti* lasted from the mid-16th to the mid-17th century, a time when the insatiable demand for oarsmen had both Christian and Muslim powers scouring the Mediterranean for all the rowers they could capture, buy, trade for, or steal. The market for *galeotti* only faded away when galley warfare was itself finally superceded. By the later 1600s, the Mediterranean powers began, one by one, to follow the lead of the British and Dutch and converted to full-rigged sailing ships that could brave more turbulent seas, carry considerably more cannon, and do without the vast armies of oarsmen. Muslim navies lagged somewhat behind in the changeover, partly for the lack of technological know-how, but also because the large, oared galley had a trusted place in that part of the Mediterranean, prized for its speed in war and for its grandeur as a ceremonial vessel. Eventually the Ottomans and Algerians also converted to sail, however, if only because they found it ever more difficult to find enough suitable rowers. The alternative, as the Algerians found in 1701, was to be stuck with "two Galleys, but not having between the two of them enough

rowers to outfit even one, and therefore this year they remain in Port, and useless."[33]

By the time Joseph Morgan was writing in the 1730s, he could conclude that "For some Years there has not been one Galley or Galeot in all *Barbary,* and consequently the Captive *Christians* are exempted from that least-tolerable and most-to-be-dreaded Employment of a Man deprived of Liberty." Still, there was plenty of work available on land for those state slaves who remained. Galley slaves had never been exclusively used for rowing—most corsairs went out hunting only in the warmer months, so the *galeotti* had traditionally been given other jobs during the half year or so when the fleet was in port. Often as not, there was very little pause between one type of labor and the other. As soon as a galley docked, part of the oarsmen were set to unloading the booty and making repairs on the vessel. The rest were hustled off to some other work on shore, one or another of those rough and dangerous "tasks that free men were no longer willing to do." For Thomas Saunders, a *galeotto* for the Tripolitans in the 1580s, the transition from sea to land was practically seamless:

> We returned againe into Tripolie, and then we were put to all manner of slaverie. I was put to hew stones and other(s] to carrie stones and some to draw the Carte with earth, and some to make morter, &. some to draw [cut] stones (for at that time the Turkes huilded a Church [i.e., a mosque]), and thus we were put to al kind of slaverie that was to bee done.[34]

As Saunders recalled, state slaves were available for whatever "kind of slaverie that was to bee done," especially the kinds of labor that required large gangs of men. They could be found shuffling around Algiers, Malta, and scores of other Mediterranean ports, pressed into service whenever there was a need for "digging stone for lime, and carrying it to a great distance from the quarries, building houses ... cieasing the harbours of mud, breaking up rocks at the entrance of harbours, and other laborious, filthy, and dangerous undertakings." Slaves of the state were also called out for military enterprises that needed gang labor. When the Pasha of Tripoli ordered his army to put down a Berber rebellion out in the desert, he "sent with them several paeces of ordinance [cannon], which were drawne by the captives

twentie miles into the countrie after them." One of those captives was Thomas Saunders, who performed the service while chained to a gang of 10 or 20 other Europeans slaves. During more peaceful times, Saunders was also sent every few days as part of a work detail to gather wood. The slaves set off on camels at sunset, riding all night to arrive at dawn at the forests of scrub juniper, some 10 to 30 miles from town. "We needed no axe nor other edge toole to cut it," Saunders recalled, "but pluckt it up by strength of hands, rootes and all ... and so gathered it together, a little at one place, and some at another; and laded our Cammels, and came home aboute seaven of the clocke that night following."[35]

Both in Muslim Algiers and Christian Valetta, the work of the port was carried out almost exclusively by slave gangs. They labored—as William Davies and John Foss did—at rebuilding and maintaining the mole; they readied the galleys for the *corso* (in which they might row); and they unloaded and warehoused the loot these vessels brought back. They dragged ships up on the beach for careening and caulking, and they prepared the lumber for masts and oars. Around Tunis, chain gangs were sent into the hills to fell trees for shipbuilding, dragging the logs by brute force down the mountainsides. Elsewhere in the cities the slaves worked as porters, especially in the kasbah, "where the streets are so narrow, that no kind of carriage is used here, not even a wheelbarrow. In many streets it is difficult for one man to pass another." They typically took the place of horses and donkeys, and particularly in Algiers, much of which was very steep, "every article that is to be transported from one part of the [city] to another ... must be carried by the slaves, with poles upon their shoulders."[36]

State slavery was run rather differently in the independent Sultanate of Morocco, especially under the long rule of Moulay Ismail, who reigned from 1672 to 1727. Bad though slavery may have been for Europeans caught up and taken to Algiers, Tunis, or the Levant (or Muslims taken to Marseilles and Livorno), general consensus at the time held that nothing quite equaled a slave's experience in Morocco. A number of first-person narrative accounts of bondage in the sultanate—several with lurid titles, like *Barbarian Cruelty*—would seem to back this up. Among those who had a great deal to say about life in the hands of Moulay Ismail were two Frenchmen—the Trinitarian Father Dominique

Busnot and the nobleman Sieur Germain Mouette—the one come to ransom slaves, the other a slave there himself, for 11 long years.

The Sultanate of Morocco (Europeans persisted in calling it an "Empire") was completely independent of Ottoman authority. Likewise, the Salé rovers, the most aggressive and successful of the Moroccan corsairs, were themselves independent from the sultans of Morocco, whose family histories for the most part linked them to interior centers of power, like Fez or Marrakesh. Throughout the first half of the 17th century, the "Sallymen" ran their own pirate republic of Bou Regreg, capturing ships and taking slaves to enrich and empower themselves. Since these corsairs prowled the open ocean, they preferred sailing frigates and tartanes to galleys, and so had no great need for slaves as *galeotti.* Instead they put most of their captives to work around town, and there was a vigorous slave market, called the Souq-el-Ghezel, that catered to both private buyers and the sultan's representative come from the interior. The luckier slaves were not treated too badly, often put to household tasks while their owners waited for them to arrange a ransom. Sieur Mouette wrote of how, when he first began:

> They gave me a good Breakfast, and after it a Basket of Corn [i.e., wheatj, to grind at a Hand-mill that was in their Kitchin. This is the most usual Labour of the Slaves in the Sea-port Towns, there being no other Mills. This toilsome Exercise requires much strength, and having never been us'd to work, 1 began to mislike it the first moment I was imploy'd, and made such coarse Flower that they could not mold it. This mov'd my Mistress to give me a young Child she had, to carry about the Town.[37]

During the 50-year heyday of the Republic of Bou Regreg, Mouette's experience in Salé might have been fairly typical and had something in common with, for example, what Chastelet des Boys went through in Algiers. This was all to change when Moulay Ismail took over in Morocco, unifying several petty sultanates in the region and establishing his own direct control over the port, and the pirates, of Sale.' Busnot noted what this meant for European slaves in the region:

> Formerly the Condition of the Captives in the Empire of Morocco was much like that of the other Christians, who are Slaves all along the Coasts of *Barbary.* The Pirates who took them were at

> liberty to sell them to other private Persons ... with whom we can deal, they being glad to part with them, when they are old, or infirm, or else have a reasonable Profit. But in the Empire of Morocco they all belong to the King, who does not care to release them.[38]

Choosing the rather backwater provincial town of Meknes to be his new capital, Moulay Ismail promptly set out on an immense building program. His intent, he told European diplomats, was to create a palace complex that would outshine Louis XlV's at Versailles. Almost overnight, his plans jump-started a voracious market for slaves, as the "Sallymen" found ample compensation for their lost freedoms in having a customer who would buy virtually ever)' Christian they could capture. These included Spaniards in large numbers, but also almost anyone who frequented the eastern reaches of the Atlantic. They took legions of Dutch, English and French slaves—so many of the latter that by the early 18th century, according to Busnot, "there were no other *French* Slaves besides themselves in *Africk."* After the 1680s, when the Salé rovers were fully mobilized at harvesting Christians, the population of European captives in all of Morocco may well have topped 25,000. Of these, at least a fifth were at work building Moulay Ismail's grand palace in Meknes. With them were supposedly another 30,000 or so Black Africans, brought in from beyond the Atlas Mountains.[39]

Though one came to Meknes as a slave and the other to rescue slaves, Mouette and Busnot agreed that there was something especially awful about captivity there. Compared to Christian slaves in Algiers and Tunis, Busnot wrote, "their Condition [in Meknes] is very different; and tho' it looks as if nothing could be added to the Miseries of the former, yet these are infinitely more to be lamented." Mouette made a more direct comparison: "Our [French] Galley Slaves are nothing near so unfortunate as those who work in the Castle of *Miqtienes* [Meknes]." Beatings were a constant, and the rations were terrible, notably worse in Meknes, Busnot recalled, than elsewhere in the sultanate. The slaves were totally in the power of a visionary overlord who was also often capricious and sometimes murderous. They were far from the coasts, out of the sight and the help of any foreign merchants or consuls. Worst of all, though, was the work itself, which the slaves were made to carry out with "Two great Chains of Eighteen or Twenty Pounds Weight upon each of us, linking us Two and Two

with another a cross." The chains were to keep the slaves from trying to escape to the coast, but they made the work extremely difficult. Over time they could prove crippling—Mouette wrote how "our Hams were all cut with the Weight of our Chains, and some of them as well as mine were a Finger deep in the Flesh."[40]

Furthermore, the accommodations given slaves in Morocco made the *bagnos of* Algiers and Tunis seem positively five-star. In both Meknes and Salé, the Europeans were generally thrust into matamoros, "moor-killers," of the sort that Padre Costa visited, though if possible even more squalid. Lacking chapels, private rooms, shops, hospitals, or taverns, the *matamoros were* really nothing more than underground human storage chambers. Burrowed into the earth, the *matamoros* could be large or small, probably depending on their original function before conversion—Laugier de Tassy mentioned some that were just living-room size—"five Fathom Diameter, and three deep"—though they might hold upwards of a hundred men, who had to enter by "going down a Ladder of Ropes, which is afterwards drawn up, and an Iron Grate fastened over the Mouth." In these "little Dungeones," Mouette reported, the slaves "lye all round, with their Heads to the Sides of the Dungeon and their Feet in the Middle, where commonly there is no more Space left than to hold an Earthen Vessel, to ease themselves, cover'd with a Lamp." Busnot described one of the large *matamoros,* a vast, if very gloomy underground structure that may well be the *Habs Qara,* the great *matamoro* of Meknes and one of the few slave pens of North Africa that can still be seen and experienced. It was, he wrote, one of:

> Those damp, subterraneous Places ... a vaulted Dungeon, supported by Pillars, with Separations, which had no other Light than what came in at little Holes at the Top of the Vault, barr'd with Iron, and through the midst of them was a Stream of Running water to supply their Wants.[41]

Some of the *matamoros* seem to have been more punishment cells than full-time prisons, but others, like Moulay Ismail's Habs Qara, were kept in operation for decades. The number of slaves sent to them naturally varied as the number of men captured and dying rose and fell, but when slave populations were high, many hundreds or even thousands might end up crammed into these foetid tombs. Emanuel

d'Aranda, who may have thought he was through with *bagno* life after leaving Algiers, had the misfortune to get stuck for several weeks in a *matamoro* in Tetuan, with his freedom almost in sight, waiting for him across the Straits in Gibraltar. His experience, locked up with 170 other Christian slaves, reads like a trip to the Black Hole of Calcutta:

> This prison hath no other light than that of three grates which are above in the mid'st of the Street ... There is no Privy in it, but the prisoners and Slaves use pots ... (that] are hung about the Walls, and so serve both for Tapestry and perfume. Besides they are not to be empty'd till night, and then an Officer opens one of the grates, and they are drawn up by a hook. And for every pot that is empty'd, there must be paid ... about half a farthing, which methinks is a great cruelty, and yet all those who are put into that miserable prison are forc'd to lye on the groound ... [and] there are so many people and the place is so strait, that the poor Slaves are forc'd to crowd together and lye like so many Herrings. Thence it comes that in the Summer time especially, there is such an abundance of Vermine and so much other nastiness, that it is as troublesome being there as rowing in the Gallics.[42]

Pulled from their matamoros every morning, the slaves were sent to their various places of work. Some of the more skilled were marched out of Meknes, chained together in a line, to the ruins of the old Roman city of Voluhilis, 20 miles to the north. There they were made "to saw, cut, cement, and erect Marble Pillars," chipping away at the old monuments with crude tools and hauling the chunks off by brute force. Looting the ruins furnished the palace with a certain amount of decorative trim, but as Mouette pointed out, "They make use of Brick and Stone only for the Jambs and Lintels of Doors." The rest of Moulay Ismail's vast palace complex, which eventually covered a staggering four square kilometers, or nearly 1,000 acres, was built of solid cement, mixed on the spot. The construction process, as Busnot explained, relied entirely on the slaves' employing the crudest possible tools and the most labor-intensive techniques:

> The Structures he makes them erect have no other Masonry but a sort of Mass, or Mortar [which] they make of a Sandy Earth, mix'd

> with power'd Lime, which knit, by being work'd together, with a little Water. The Slaves put that together, and beat it ven' close [i.e., tightly] between two Planks, at such a Distance from each other as is to be the Thickness of the Wall they are to raise ... The Height of those Walls is generally twenty Foot. So high the poor Captives are forc'd to earn' the Earth, the Lime, and the Water on their Shoulders; having no Scaffolds, and being bare foot, the Ladders cut their Feet, and the more because [their feet] are often loaded with Irons.[43]

Such structures, based on the repeated use of the arch, depended on walls that were six or more feet thick. As such, they were impressively robust, able to withstand anything short of a major earthquake. The English slave Thomas Phelps noted how "we have seen Walls of some Hundred years standing as we were informed, and all that time has not been able to do them any prejudice" Many of the walls still stand, fully three centuries later, vivid testimony to the constructive power of slave labor, though mute on the suffering and effort that they required (see Figure 12.4). To erect these courtyards, colonnades, and long rows of squat arches, the slaves were given tools that the Israelites working in Egypt might have recognized—"Great Chops," or "Pickaxes of an extraordinary Weight," to tear down the original walls and buildings or mine the sandy earth; wooden buckets to carry the water and "large baskets" for the earth and lime. For mixing and pressing the concrete, "their Instrument ... is a heavy wooden stamper."[44]

Moulay Ismail regularly took over with the design work of his palace and was forever changing his mind how things were to be done. Over the course of his long reign, he repeatedly ordered his slaves to tear down walls put up a generation earlier, starting afresh on a new plan. Busnot recalled how "In the Space of four Months [Moulay Ismail] caus'd above four Leagues [twelve miles] in Length of Wall to be thrown down and beaten to Powder, in order to raise new." Interested in creating a modern capital city in Meknes, Moulay Ismail also set his slaves to work on the infrastructure of roads, bridges, and waterworks. At one point, Mouette recalled:

> He sent us to work at the Common Sewers he was making to carry off the Filth of the Town. For Three Months he allow'd every one of us but four Ounces of Barley Bread a day, appointing Twelve

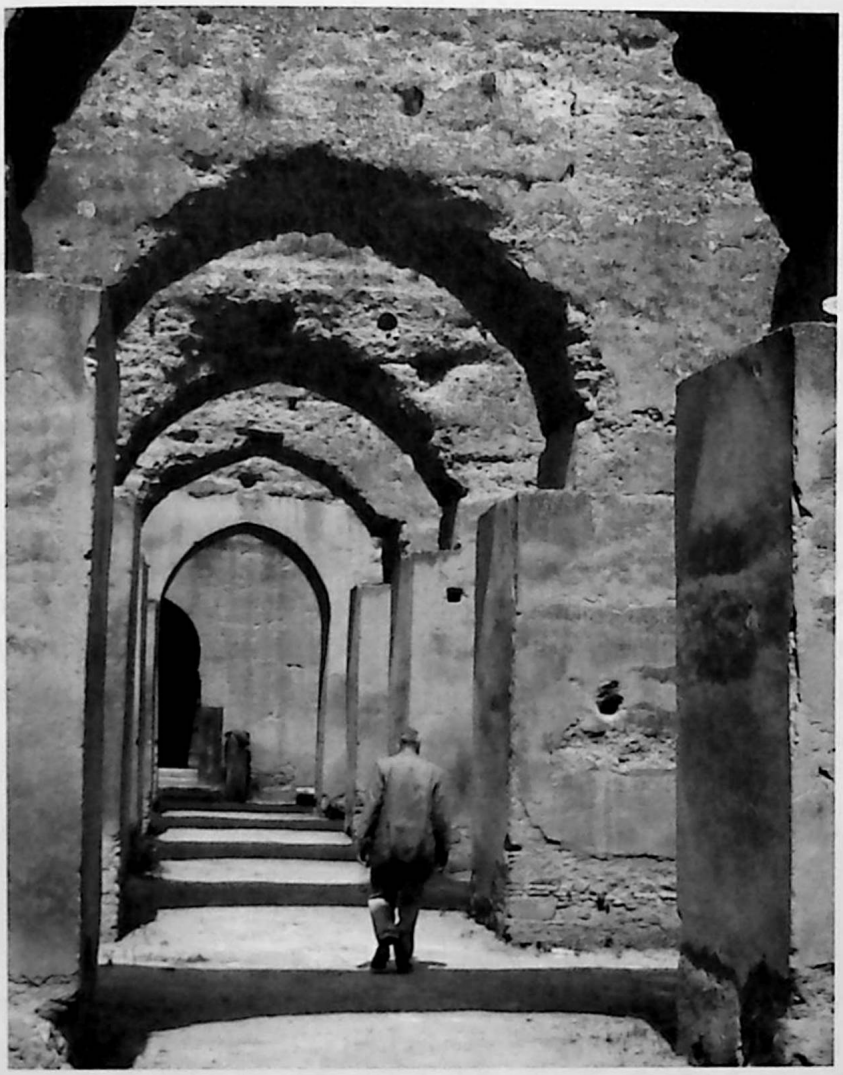


Figure 12.4 The Heri es*Souani, in the Palace of Meknes. Photo courtesy of author.

> Guardians, or rather Executioners, who beat us unmercifully ... When the Sewers were finish'd, they made us empty all the Privies and remove all the Dunghills in the Town, carrying all the Filth in Wicker Baskets, so that it ran through and fell on us."[45]

Many of those who worked on it were convinced that the palace at Meknes was never intended to be finished. Francis Brooks wrote how Moulay Ismail "hath great Buildings in his Castle, which will not be finished in his time, and there he keeps the poor People at work, in order to suppress and keep them low." This notion that the sultan

ordered the construction to continue as a way to abuse his workers was widespread among the slaves, who probably thought they had good reason to believe that in "their Sufferings [he found] his Pleasure." As Busnot explained:

> For this reason he is perpetually building, or pulling down, or rebuilding, lest they should have any time of Ease, having often in his mouth [these] Words: ... "These people think of nothing but making their Escape; let us wear them out with Labour, till they lose the ven' Remembrance of their Liberty. For when they have but one Day of Rest, they think of nothing but running away."[46]

Sometimes there were pauses in the work on "the Emperor's extravagant Buildings," and Moulay Ismail's slaves were put onto other tasks. Busnot wrote of a massive landscaping project that was underway when he visited Meknes in 1704, where teams of slaves were "set to work to gmb up four Leagues of Land, all planted with prickly Palm-Trees, called *Palmitos."* These they had to uproot with their bare hands, though "the Leaves of those Trees cut like Knives, and are as sharp pointed as Nails." Having cleared the land, the men had to "transplant above a thousand Olive-Trees, most of them so large, that one of them required twenty Men to carry it." Another time (also according to Busnot), the slaves had to dig up the contents of their own cemetery, down to a depth of six feet, and carry both the dirt and the remains of some hundreds of corpses to a new location several miles away—so that Moulay Ismail could incorporate the land into his palace gardens without the profaning presence of any traces of Christians.[47]

Some slaves, especially the newcomers, were assigned to "the least toilsome Employments, as making of Mortar, sweeping the Streets, and serving in the Stables." Yet, whether light work or heavy, in Meknes it was all carried out under the constant threat of the lash. Slaves were whipped for making mistakes, working too slowly, or taking the slightest pause. "If those who work above [on the scaffolding! cease but one moment pounding the Earth that is between the Planks with heavy Rammers," Mouette wrote, "the Overseers, who have quick Ears, throw stones at them to continue their perpetual Labour" (see Figure 12.5). There was no time off even to eat, he went on: "They dare not give over to eat a bit of Bread, but are to hold it in one hand, and to

work with the other." The "Guardians, Task-Masters, and Drivers" who kept the slaves working were usually Black Africans—"hellish Negroes," Francis Brooks called them, who "grievously hurried and punished the poor Christians ... with whips of small Cords and Sticks from Morning till Night." [48]

Judging by Mouette's account, one Black African driver was placed in charge of 10 or 15 Christian slaves at each work site. For the Europeans these overseers seemed the very incarnation of malevolence. Mouette wrote of his at Meknes, that "the very sight of that Devil made us quake;" and when it came to heatings, "he always took care to bestow [them] on those parts where he thought they would do the most hurt." Yet the overseers were just slaves themselves, the lowest in a chain of enforcers and inflictors of pain. Above them in this

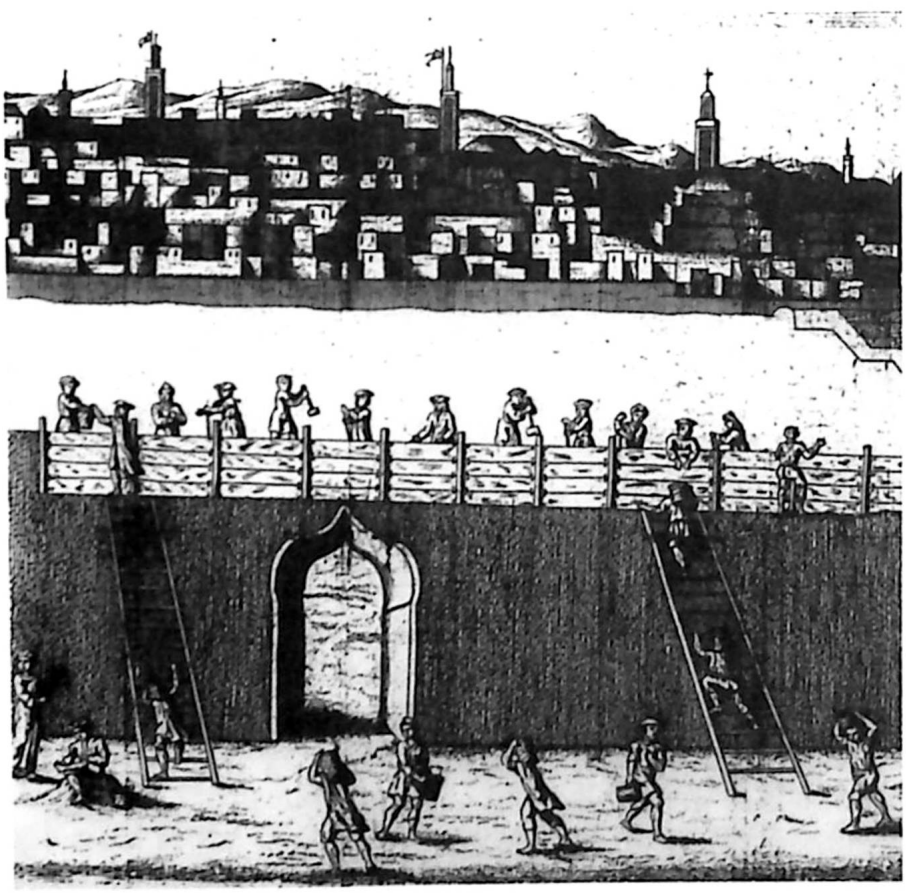


Figure 12.5 Slaves building Royal Palace at Meknes. Philemon de la Motte, *Voyage pour la redemptiopn des captifs aux royaumes d'Alger et de Tunis* (Paris, 1721), J. Morgan trans, as *Several Voyages to Barbary* (London, 1736).

hierarchy of terror were those administrators known to the slaves with the Spanish term *alcaides,* or governors. These were Moors or sometimes renegade Christians, the men responsible for the progress of the works. As free with their heatings to the overseers as to the slaves, these "little Tyrants," as Busnot called them, still answered in their turn to Moulay Ismail and a favored few of his many sons. Like the overseers, the *alcaides* drove the slaves in good part because they were well aware of the price of failure, or even the slightest delay in carrying out their orders. As a result of this "extravagant Government," even those in power had no assurance that their turn would not be coming, for they, as much as any slave, might be suddenly and abruptly executed on orders of the sultan, who followed rules and whims that only he could know. Busnot claimed:

> Women take a solemn Leave of their Husbands when they go to [the Palace], as not knowing when they will ever return; especially the *Alcaides* and Officers at the Works cannot promise themselves that they shall go home again. And very often the Wives, who have thus lost their Husbands, receive the dismal News by two or three Blacks, who come to seize all the dead Mens effects, whom the King always looks upon as Criminals, when he has kill'd them.[49]

For the Europeans who fell into state slavery there, Morocco was a dystopia like no other. The dangers and difficulties they faced were the result of a unique confluence of factors that fortunately only came together in this one time and place. Nowhere else, not in Barbary, the Levant, nor in the Christian states, were the talents of extremely able slavers like the Salé rovers harnessed to the megalomania of someone like Moulay Ismail. Nowhere else in North Africa were there wealthy and populous capital cities and slaving centers that were far enough from the coast to he completely safe from the increasingly overwhelming naval power of the Christian nations and from the blandishments of their emissaries. Stuck in this black hole, the slaves in Meknes were in the personal, absolute power of a man:

> Who does not care to release them, because he finds them more skillful and handy at Building, which is their usual Employment, besides that by their means he draws Presents from all *European* nations ... a Prince who is devoted to his Interest, Crafty,

> Faithless and with whom there is no deriving any Bargain; who is also inaccessible, there being no coming at him.

In other ways, though, state slavery in Salé and Meknes was not so unique. All over the Mediterranean, from Algiers to Marseilles, from Valetta to Cairo, these public slaves, converted into government property, were bought and sold by bureaucrats who needed their labor and controlled them without impediment of the laws of either God or man. State slaves represented a renewable resource that was useful and often vital in the operations of Early Modern Mediterranean economies and statecraft. As long as the galley ruled the Inner Sea, military planners depended on them, but their muscle also provided an essential core in civilian labor forces for over three centuries. Northern Europeans, who might he familiar with the sight of slave gangs in Barbados or the Carolinas, may have been surprised to come across them in Genoa or Naples, but such work parties were a stubborn feature of the region, still to be found in many cities well into the 19th century.

Today there are few reminders of the institutional status that state slavery enjoyed for centuries around the Mediterranean. In Cape Coast, in Ghana, and elsewhere along the West African coast, the old slave pens and diabolical dens have been converted to monuments to the eastern terminus of the notorious trans-Atlantic trade. Such commemorations are much harder to come by in Morocco or Barbary. The slave markets themselves have been converted to city parks or marketplaces selling less noxious goods. The *bagnos* have all hut disappeared, occupied and split up into apartments by local residents, converted to government uses (in Livorno one of the two old *bagnos* is now a dog track), or just allowed to crumble. The Habs Qara in Meknes is open for tourists, though some scholars claim that it never was a slave pen or *matamoro* in the first place, hut simply a large underground storehouse.

Interestingly, one memorial to state slavery to be seen in the Christian world was dedicated less to the slaves themselves than to their master. This is Pietro Tacca's 1623 bronze group known as the *Quattro Mori,* located at the port of Livorno, in Italy (see Figure 12.6). These four monumental "Moors" are bound to the pedestal of a statue of Ferdinando 1 (Grand Duke of Florence, 1587-1609), by real chains. They display physiognomies that range from Negroid to Caucasian, but all have distinctively Turkish topknots or beards. They writhe

Figure 12.6 Statue of the Quattro Mori, By Pietro Tacca and Giovanni Bandini, Livorno, Italy. Photo courtesy of author.

against their fetters, the pain of their enslavement engraved into the contortions of their bodies. The realism with which they were rendered is not surprising, considering that Tacca supposedly used live models from the nearby Bagno dei Forzati, real Turks on leave from their duties as *galeotti.* The statue of Ferdinando, by contrast, was carved in marble in the late 1590s by Giovanni Bandini, in a much more idealized, classical style.

The entire monument—the Moors, the chains, the pedestal, Ferdinando (and a pile of bronze Islamic "war trophies" originally scattered at his feet but looted by Napoleon's soldiers in 1797)—was meant to be a public declaration of Florentine might. Visitors stepping from their ships onto the quay saw a dominant Ferdinando—Grand Duke of Florence, Grand Master of the Knights of St. Stephen, and lord over these trophies and human wreckage of Barbary, won by his loyal

followers. As compositions go, it brings to mind equestrian statues of other monarchs, casually dominating their rearing warhorse, symbol of the unruly power of the ruler's subjects and his state. If this was Tacca's intention, however, he may have gone too far, in chaining such alarmingly wretched figures to a Ferdinando who seems less casual or competent than indifferent and a touch insipid. He is surrounded and in a sense supported by these writhing Moors, who in their nearness and their realism appear to dominate him. To the visitor from northern Europe, especially those coming ashore in the 1700s, during the rational flowering of the Enlightenment, the monument may well have spoken less of triumph in holy war than of religious hatred and gratuitous human suffering. From that time until the present, the four Moors twisting in their chains have attracted far more public attention than Ferdinando standing blandly above them.

CHAPTER 13

WHAT LADY MARY SAW

Daughter of one earl and wife of another, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu was also among the first in a long line of traveling British women—intrepid females who voyaged to exotic lands and wrote up their adventures for an ever more eager public hack home. Literate, witty, and beautiful, Lady Mar)' had already proved a big hit as a young woman, both at court and in literary circles. When she went abroad, as might he expected, she traveled first class. She made her trip to the Turkish lands, in 1716-1718, courtesy of her husband, who was also Britain's ambassador to the Sublime Porte. Once in Constantinople, though, Lady Mary was often on her own, and she was ripe to experience the visual, musical, and culinary delights of Turkey's glorious and decadent Tulip Period. As to what she saw, smelled, and ate, she reported it all home, in numerous, detailed letters to her friends (some real, some imagined). Eventually these were collected together, under the appropriate title of *Turkish Embassy Letters.* Though never published during Lady Mary's lifetime—she was supposedly too nervous that the critics would savage them—the *Letters* circulated widely in manuscript copies. By all accounts they were avidly consumed by those British stay-at-homes whose fascination for all things "Oriental" consistently exceeded the available supply.

Lady Mar)' promised her readers material that they would find a cut above the "trite observations" of those who had preceded her into Turkish lands. All of these had been men, she noted,—men who tended to write "with equal ignorance and confidence." The generations of male travelers who had preceded her to the Sultan's Palace were stopped dead by the frowning eunuchs who stood guard outside the doors of the

harem, the seraglio, and the female bath house. These thresholds marked the "Ne *plus ultra* for every thing that looks like a Man," as one of them put it. No one from outside had gotten a glimpse of what went on inside these exotic and erotic realms, though it never stopped them from passing on rumors or spinning conjectures. Lady Mary had a good laugh at the witless accounts they tried to fob off on the public back home:

> Tis a particular pleasure to me here, to read the voyages to the Levant, which are generally so far removed from truth, and so full of absurdities, 1 am very well diverted with them. They never fail giving you an account of the women, whom 'tis certain they never saw, and talking very wisely of the genius of the men, into whose company they are never admitted.[1]

It was not just the implicit power of her gender and class that made Lady Mary so sublimely confident about entering places that had been off limits to travelers from time immemorial. She was also quite up-to-date on her reading about the East. Just a few years earlier, Antoine Galland had published his pastiche fable of ancient Bagdad, *Mille et line units.* The tales had been wildly popular in Western literary circles and Lady Mary had poured over them with special care. Whether or not she carried a copy in her luggage (it was 12 volumes long), she clearly used it in her travels—as one scholar has noted, "as a reference text, a source of ethnographic data to be cited as an authority." She had also read widely in both classical and contemporary works on the Levant, was fast teaching herself Turkish, and traveled with a copy of the Qur'an in French. From the time she set foot in Ottoman lands, Lady Mary was ready to assume her duties as the literary world's Special Correspondent to the Orient.[2]

As it happened, she had an easy time gaining access to the exotic and occluded world promised by the fables. She and her husband only needed to arrive, whether in imperial outposts like Belgrade or in the Ottoman heartland—in Adrianople (Edirne) and Constantinople—and invitations to enter behind those closed doors would shower down. It seems that the wives of the Ottoman great and powerful were just as curious about Lady Mary as she—and her readers—were about them. Though she tended to make little of her own privileged ties to imperial

Britain, she was surely aware that these, as much as her gender, guaranteed her entry to this world of "luscious passion" that so enthralled her readership. The Ottoman high and mighty were determined to use ev-er)' tool they had—including their own wives—to charm and investigate this new power that was intruding into their world. Happy to make the most of the privileged access they gave her, Lady Mary set out to exploit the possibilities of her first-hand experience:

> You will perhaps be surprised at an account so different from what you have been entertained with by the common voyager-writers, who are ver)' fond of speaking of what they don't know. It must be under a ver)' peculiar character, or on some extraordinary occasion, when a Christian is permitted into the house of a man of quality, and their *harems* are always forbidden ground. Thus they [i.e., the voyage-writers) can speak only of the outside, which makes no great appearance; and the women's apartments are all built backwards, removed from sight, and have no other prospect than the gardens, which are enclosed with ver)' high walls.'

Lady Mar)' wrote of visiting three Ottoman ladies in their harems—one of them twice. Schooled as she was by Galland, and by Francois Petis de la Croix's *Milles et tin jours,* she was on the lookout for all forms of "Oriental" splendor and—if at all possible — decadence. What most caught her attention was all the excess: the opulent furnishings, the costly outfits of her hostesses, and the enormous meals she had to put away—"fifty dishes of meat, which (after their fashion) were placed on the table but one at a time, and [it] was extremely tedious." Accounts of such splendor and beauty were a fascination for her British readership, but Lady Mary was also pretty sure where her public's interests really lay. "I know you'll expect I should say something particular of the slaves," she wrote, and on this one "Oriental" trope she definitely did not spare the details.[4]

In Western eyes, nothing so characterized the "Oriental" harem as a full panoply of slave girls. Lady Mary happily reported how, having been "met at the door by two black eunuchs," she was led "through a long gallery between two ranks of beautiful young girls, with their hair finely plaited, almost hanging to their feet, all dressed in fine light damasks, brocaded with silver." Having difficulty in coping with "a

passion so powerful with me as curiosity," Lady Mary had to admit that, "I was sorry that decency did not permit me to stop to consider them nearer." Later, however, as on the other visits she made, these "she-slaves" (as Lady Maty called them) were very much on display, and she would have plenty of opportunity to consider them all she wanted.[5]

Although Lady Mary wrote in passing of the "men [who] buy women with an eye to evil," and of the she-slaves who "serve the pleasures of the great men," the harems she visited were wholly female worlds, the domains—essentially the courts—of powerful women, all of them the wives or widows of even more powerful men. Around every feminine sun revolved a host of "fair maids"—20 or 30 seemed a fairly typical number. These, wrote Lady Maty, "put me in mind of the picture of ancient nymphs. I do not think all nature could have furnished such a scene of beauty." As to the duties of these girls, she was not too clear. Sometimes "they served me coffee upon their knees in the finest japan china, with *soucoupes* [saucers] of silver gilt." Other times, "kneeling [they] *censed* my hair, clothes, and handkerchief." Presumably some of them also served the fifty dishes of meat, but mostly they seem to have been there to entertain:

> [The hostess] made them a sign to play and dance. Four of them immediately began to play some soft airs on instruments, between a lute and a guitar, which they accompanied with their voices, while the others danced by turns. This dance was very different from what 1 had seen before. Nothing could be more artful, or more proper to raise certain ideas. The tunes so soft!—the motions so languishing!—accompanied with pauses and dying eyes! half-falling back, and then recovering themselves in so artful a manner, that 1 am very positive the coldest and most rigid prude upon earth could not have looked upon them without thinking of something not to be spoken of.[6]

Shades of Sinbad! How better to whet the fancies of Orientalists back home, male or female, than with this succulent little scene? Cosseted with fine fabrics, rare perfumes and ointments (including the legendary' "balm of Mecca," which Lady Mary boasted having "had a present of a small quantity"), these young women seemingly lived only for pleasure, barely distinguishing between their own and others' desires. That their lives were passed in bondage apparently made little impression

on the daughter and wife of earls. “Their slavery is, in my opinion, no worse than servitude all over the world," Lady Mary sniffed. To her, Eastern slavery meant not getting paid for one’s work—rather than a total lack of freedom—but who cared about wages, she somewhat solipsistically rejoined, when “they give them yearly clothes to a higher value than our salaries to any ordinary servant.”[7]

Of more immediate interest to Lady Mary was how such marvelous creatures—she called them creatures, not humans—were crafted. She informed her readers that girls such as these were “all bought at the age of eight or nine years old, and educated with great care, to accomplish them in singing, dancing, embroider}', &c.” (The “&c.” presumably referred to those who were purchased “to serve the pleasure of the great men”). Circassian girls, native to the Caucasus, were preferred for their beauty and grace. They were either kidnapped by Tartars or brought by their own impoverished parents for sale in Constantinople. To train them, virtual schools of comportment were run in the best harems. Lady Mar}- recalled that the Sultana Hafitén, widow of a previous sultan, maintained a stable of 30 she-slaves “besides ten little ones, the eldest not above seven years old.” She noted that, “It is a great part of the business of the older slaves to take care of these girls, to learn them to embroider, and serve them as carefully as if they were children of the family.” Perhaps recalling how hard it was to get good help back home, Lady Mar}' stressed that “these lovely children (are] ... a vast expense; for there is not a handsome girl of that age to be bought under a hundred pounds sterling.”[8]

What Lady Mar}' saw, when the Black eunuchs escorted her through the great harem doors, was strongly tinged by the expectations she had formed in reading such fantasies as the *Arabian Nights.* “The magnificence and riches that reign in the apartments of the ladies of fashion here seem to be one of their chief pleasures,” she reported with evident admiration. It was a pleasure that was “joined with their retinue of female slaves, whose music, dancing, and dress amuse them highly.” Of course, life in the harem could not have been so idyllic. Someone in this all-female world must have done the laundry, given the sultana her toilette, and cleaned up after Lady Mary left. If all this was not done by the lovely Circassian nymphs, it must have been the task of other, less favored or adorable slaves. Though she chose not to tell her readers about them, Lady Mar}' was certainly aware that such

slaves existed, and that their lives could not have been so pretty. She seemed to have little sympathy for their lot, however, perhaps because their very existence appeared at odds with the sweet sensuality she had come expecting to find. When she did write of such "creatures," it was with much less interest, revealing perhaps how much more the ruling classes of East and West had in common with each other than with their inferiors:

> Those that are exposed to sale at the markets are always either guilty of some crime, or so entirely worthless that they are of no use at all ... Those who are to be bought in that manner, are either such as are taken in war, or stolen by the Tartars from Russia, Circassia, or Georgia, and are such miserable, awkward, poor wretches, you would not think any of them worthy to be your housemaids.[9]

CHAPTER 14

BEHIND LATTICED WINDOWS AND DAMASKED HALLS

The shc-slaves whose capers Lady Mary Wortley Montague admired may have sung and even spoken to her, but for history they were silent. None of them escaped or was ransomed back to her homeland, to some day publish a narrative of her adventures. None of them—or at least none that we know of—was interviewed by a kindly priest from one of the religious orders that concerned itself with ransoming slaves in Muslim hands. None of them wrote home to describe her life. They existed, very briefly, in a few letters written by this benign, if largely uncomprehending foreigner, and then vanished from history, leaving no other traces.

Much the same could he said more generally of female slaves around the Mediterranean, whether Christian or Muslim. Their appearance is fleeting, their traces impersonal. There is some record of them in the *sliari'ah* law courts in Muslim lands—slave women who sued their masters for various causes—but the case transcriptions are largely formulaic and these women's voices are flat and impersonal. There are also some rabbinical *responsa* concerning (usually Christian) slave women belonging to Ottoman Jews, but these largely reflect the owners' concerns, and the slaves are more objects than subjects. Analogously, we have some court cases involving Muslim slave women in Italy and Spain, accusing their masters of abuse or seeking to abjure their religion, but these too are scattered and thin.

There do exist a few published accounts supposedly written by Christian women who fell into Muslim hands in North Africa during the 18th and 19th century. These are nothing like the well-known captivity narratives of the British and French women who fell into Native

American hands, however. For some reason, certain modem scholars have dismissed them as masculine forgeries (as did, oddly enough, some of her contemporaries with Lady Mary's *Turkey Embassy Letters),* though no one has ever said exactly why. The unhappy experiences recounted by, for example, "Mrs. Crisp" and Violetta Laranda are in any case rather anomalous among female slaves—the one was more of a hostage, the other the slave of a nomadic tribe of the Beduin.

As a result, making sense of female slavery around the Mediterranean has proven quite difficult—much harder than for that of men (which has been hard enough). Even at the time of their enslavement, the lack of personal accounts, combined with their forced seclusion and general invisibility in Muslim lands, left the field largely free for others to impose their own notions and fantasies as to what those lives might be like. Certainly Lady Mary Wortley Montagu felt free to imagine the harems she visited as her own *Arabian Nights, even* if in a well-bred, enlightened rationalist, and slightly feminist way. Not all observers were so kind.

Something of a closet industry sprang up among those dedicated to describing in often-lubricious detail the layout and doings of the Seraglio and harem of the Grand Turk in Constantinople. One of these was Ottaviano Bon, the otherwise quite respectable Venetian ambassador to the Sultan, who in 1604 came out with his *Description of the Seraglio of the Grand Signor.* Nominally, this was part of his official report to the Venetian Senate concerning conditions in the Ottoman capital, but this particular section sufficiently piqued public interest that it was soon circulating as an independent work, eventually translated into English and published in London. In it, Bon devoted many pages to the feminine side of the vast Ottoman court—the home, he claimed, of some 3,000 women and girls, "including young ones fit to be seen and embraced by the king [i.e., the sultan], old ones who governed, and others of service."[1]

This was a world of immense complexity, often rather clumsily reported and interpreted by men whose comprehension and motives were of the most superficial nature. Bon, for one, claimed to have arranged a tour of the imperial apartments when the Grand Turk and his harem were out of town hunting, so he never actually saw the seraglio in action. Limited to viewing empty rooms and hearing the gossip of their guides, neither he nor his successor fantasists could do more

than conjecture just how "the amorous Sultan toys away his minutes in the wanton raptures of his ladies' conversation." Men such as Bon, and the later English traveler Aaron Hill, gave their imaginations free reign to conjure the (for them) paradisaical gardens and chambers filled entirely with women—young virgins of "wanton inclinations ... [who,] kept from the society' or sight of men, might prompt [themselves] to the practice of ... immodest or indecent pastimes." Bon purveyed for his readers—presumably gray-bearded Venetian Senators—images of a lesbian jungle, where suggestively shaped fruits and vegetables had to be chopped up "to deprive them of the occasion to do evil, being [that they are] pliable, well fed, and without doubt inclined to the worst." Hill conjured a sapphic society drunk on its own sensuality, where:

> These licentious ladies run wildly up and down the field, and form a kind of sport ... [while] others dance upon another part of the same green, here some are conversing merrily, there three or four are lolling in the shade, stretching and rolling up and down in wanton postures.[3]

The inclination to populate the harem with imagined women was not a vice limited to male travelers. Lady Maty', as we have seen, saw this women's world through glasses crafted by Antione Galland and Franqois Petis de la Criox. If the pictures she painted were less smirking or lurid than those of her contemporary Aaron Hill, they still conveyed a social reality that the sultanas and she-slaves she portrayed might have found hard to recognize. The same holds true of her oft-quoted trip to the Bulgarian capital and spa town of Sofia—"famous for its hot baths" (see Figure 14.1). Recalling the Turkish bath, or *hammam,* she visited there, Lady Maty' offered her reader another kind of female idyll, an Eden of peaceful equality where nudity and beauty abolished distinctions of class and caste:

> [There] sat the ladies ... [with] their slaves behind them, but without any distinction of rank by the dress, all being in the state of nature, that is, in plain English, stark naked, without any Beauty or defect concealed. Yet there was not the least wanton smile or immodest gesture amongst them. They walked and moved with the same majestic grace which Milton describes our General Mother. There were many amongst them as exactly

Figure 14.1 Lady Mary Worrley Montagu visiting the Turkish bath in Edime. *Letters of the Right Honourable Lady* M-y W-y *M-e* (frontispiece, Berlin: August Mylius, 1781).

> proportioned as ever any Goddess was drawn by the pencil of Guido or Titian—and most of their skins shiningly white, only adorned by their beautiful hair ... so many fine women naked, in different postures, some in conversation, some working, others drinking coffee or sherbet, and many negligently lying on their Cushions while their slaves (generally pretty girls of seventeen or eighteen) were employed in braiding their hair .. ?

Of course, Lady Mary's enlightened claims to the contrary, nudity hardly guaranteed equality. Slaves still tended their mistresses, and

Lady Mary's passing mention of the youth of those "pretty girls" underscores how a hierarchy of age supplemented one of caste. All of this was, of course, perfectly evident to local women, who knew quite well the rank of everyone in the bath, whether dressed or naked. Very likely, much of what Lady Mary claimed to have encountered in the baths at Sofia was pure invention. That she chose to produce a scene for her readers that highlighted both Edenic innocence and Classical grace is not to say that no such elements were present among these bathing women, but we cannot treat her narrative as any more a photographic representation than the fantasies of Bon or Hill (or Galland). It is enough to compare her visit to the *hammam* to one undertaken by another female English traveler, a Lady Elizabeth Craven. Coming to Ottoman-ruled Athens in 1786, at the other end of the Enlightenment, Lady Elizabeth also stopped by a Turkish bath. Like Lady Mary, she saw no distinctions of mistress and slave in the rooms of naked female flesh, but she also saw little in the way of grace or innocence:

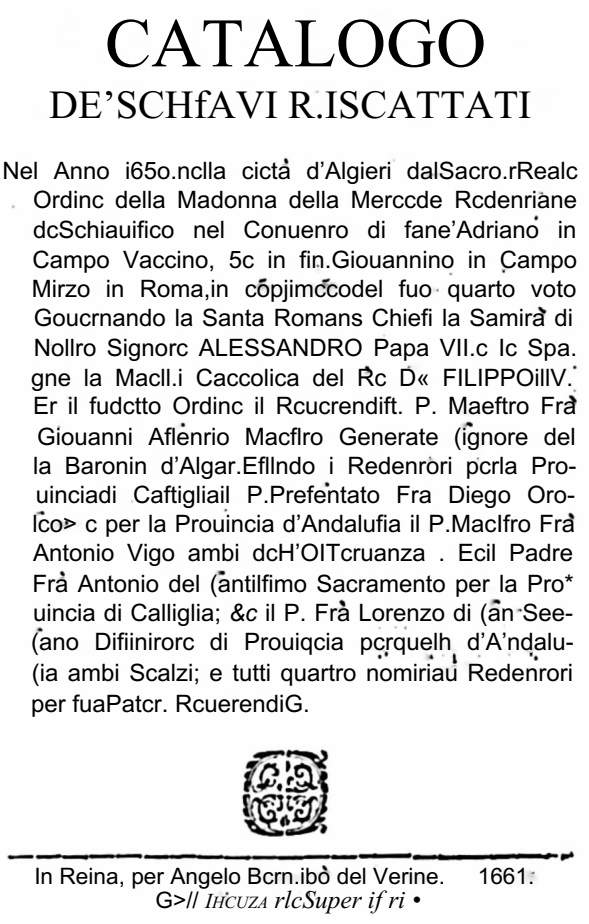
> There were above fifty [women]; some having their hair washed, others dyed, or plaited ... 1 saw here Turkish and Greek nature, through every degree of concealment, in her primitive state—for the women sitting in the inner [hot] room were absolutely so many Eves—and as they came out their flesh looked boiled ... I think 1 never saw so many fat women at once together, no fat ones so fat as these ... [Though] we had very pressing solicitations to undress and bathe, such a disgusting sight as this would have put me in an ill humour with my sex in a bath for ages.[4]

Much of our ignorance about the nature of female slavery around the Mediterranean is due to the secluded conditions in which most of these women were held. Even in Christian towns, where female slaves enjoyed a certain freedom of movement, such women were generally kept from public view, and we often know of their existence only from (fairly untrustworthy) tax declarations. In Muslim lands, where harems were rooted deep in the social structure, female slaves were almost completely invisible to male observers, even for those select few who, like the French diplomat Laurent D'Arvieux, were invited to the

home of a local notable. Some female state slaves apparently existed, but we have little evidence of them. There is just a single known example of a women's slave pen—a *bagno delle* donne. The missionary who mentioned it, in a 1763 survey of slave conditions in Algiers, had maddeningly little to say about what that actually meant, only noting that "The church of the *Bagno delle Donne* [goes] under the title of Saint Augustine, where there are around 150 people, [divided] among women, daughters, old maids, and little girls."'

On the other hand, some historians have suggested that we know very' little about the feminine side of enslavement simply because there was not very much to know. They point to the published lists, or "catalogues," put out by various redemptive organizations during the 17th and 18th centuries of the slaves they had ransomed (see Figure 14-2). These show a clear predominance of men over women. Whether listing slaves who were freed from North Africa or from the Levant, the catalogues indicate that from 10 percent down to as little as 3 percent of those ransomed were women or girls. There is other evidence, for more specific times and places that backs up this disparity. For example, in looking at the notarized ransoming certificates from the late 17th century' recorded by the French consul in Tunis, the Tunisian historian Leîla Blili found that Christian women made up somewhere between 1 percent and 6 percent of the total. Similar sources for Algiers and Tripoli, though spottier, tell much the same story'.

At first glance, this disparity makes some sense. Although to the modern mind the female concubine/harem slave has become something of the poster girl for Islamic Mediterranean slavery', the enslavement of Europeans was really about men. Muslims and Christians hunted each other for muscle and for money, seeking captives to put to work and to ransom. Men were generally better suited for both. Obviously, rowing the galleys, digging in quarries, and working on farms was masculine work, but in some ways men were also easier to ransom. The importance of having male breadwinners and—for the elite—of protecting lines of succession meant that both Christian and Muslim families more willingly scraped together ransom funds for their menfolk than for their women. Both sides also seem to have been more comfortable in using men for exchanges, on those occasions when such swaps could be worked out between military contingents or rulers.



CATALOGO
DE'SCHfAVI R.ISCATTATI

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In Reina, per Angelo Bcrn.ibò del Verine. 1661.
G>// IHCUZA *rlcSuper if ri* •

Figure 14.2 Cover page of Catalogue of Mercedarian Redemption of 1660. Courtesy of Trinitarian Church of San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane, Rome.

There were also the simple dynamics of the Mediterranean slaving business. Both Christians and Muslims did much, if not most of their slave hunting at sea, and it was men who were more likely to risk themselves on the water, whether as fishermen, sailors, soldiers, or merchants. Men were also the ones most exposed in garrison duty—in watchtowers along the Italian coasts, in Spain's military outposts in North African cities like Oran and Mers-El-Kébr, or on the long Turco-Hungarian frontier. For centuries these were the front lines in a ongoing holy war that generated prisoners-of-war by the tens of thousands, more often local peasants drafted for guard duty than actual soldiers. By contrast, it seems obvious that women on both sides of the Mediterranean tended to stay at home. The very customs of female

seclusion that were so pervasive in the region tended to mitigate against women in general putting themselves in harm's way.

And yet, a closer look indicates that the story might not have been all that clear cut. For one thing, women and children did go to sea fairly often in these years—as we have already seen with the unhappy experiences of the Turk-turned-Christian, Juan Bautista La Cueva, and his large family. Even those women who remained prudently in their villages were by no means safe, since the corsairs were perfectly willing to come find them at home. Both Muslim and Christian corsairs willingly sacked coastal villages when they thought they could get away with it, and their main target was enslaveable townsfolk. Inevitably, many of those they captured were female, quite simply because women, burdened with skirts and children, were slower at running away. Father Alberto Bianchini, writing in 1666, provided an especially vivid account of how one such woman fell prey to corsair raiders who came ashore on a June night on Italy's Adriatic coast:

> There is new information to cry [about]. Lately, thirty armed Turks disembarked from a Jiista and captured the people [whose names are] contained in the enclosed note ... Among them ... was Maria Marchiorra, daughter of Paolo di Domenico di Tullo of Grotte [Grottammare, in the Italian Marche], around twenty years old. This was a most beautiful young girl. Her poor father dragged her behind him to save her, along with two others, 1 believe also his girls. Great Judgement of God! The poor girl fainted out of fear, such that the poor old man could not drag her [away]. He saved the other two girls, but then three Turks arrived, and they carried her off.[6]

Exposed and vulnerable in their coastal homes, village women offered still more tempting targets for the corsairs because, quite often, the men who might have helped defend them were away, gone to sea to fish or sail, sometimes for weeks on end. Their daily search for food also drove many women to leave whatever slight safety their villages might have offered, as they went down to the coasts to look for sea life or to the fields to seek farm work. In the lonely countryside they were especially at risk. When her menfolk were away at sea, this is what Rosa Antonia Monte, from the Puglian town of Barletta on the heel of Italy, was forced to do. Otherwise, she had no hope of feeding

herself and her two daughters, Angela and Palma Grillo (ages 12 and 3 years old). For them, survival meant gleaning in the fields surrounding the village, picking through the stubble for grain after the harvesters had mown the wheat. Considered among "the poorest women who live in Barletta," the three formed part of a large group of mostly poor women, who went out to try their luck, though the fields were close to the coast and readily exposed to corsairs. Sure enough, one day in the early summer of 1677, their luck ran out. As the mayor of their village later reported:

> She was enslaved last June with her two daughters, in the country as they were gleaning grain from the new harvest that was made in that month. [They were doing it] because of their great poverty, and with them were also enslaved in the same place as many as forty other people.[7]

Considering who was around and available, it seems likely that in their coastal raids, the corsair slavers probably took as many, if not more, women than men, on average. When they pillaged Perasto (modern-day Perast, in Montenegro) in 1624, for example, it was said that they carried off "a prey [that] was almost entirely women and children." Such was also the case in 1727, when the Tunisians sacked the village of San Felice, not far from Rome. The captives they loaded on board were over 80 percent women and girls. Likewise, well over two-thirds of the 124 captives that the corsair Murat Re'is took from the Irish coastal village of Baltimore in 1631 were women and children.

Nor was it just a question of corsairs coming to take whatever they could grab and settling for females since they were available. Many slavers actually made an effort not only to capture women and girls, hut also to get them back home as quickly, which is to say as safely, as possible. An English *galeotto* who took part in a successful Algerian raid on the Spanish village of Calpe, between Alicante and Valencia, recalled, for example, how "the women and children the next day they sent upon a Galley for *Argiere,* hut put all the men to the Oare" for what would obviously he a much slower and more painful trip back. The interest slavers had in harvesting females was also reflected in the discrimination they showed in the women they hunted for. In the east, they knew they could get paid a premium for the "Native of *Georgia,*

where the finest Women in the World are said to be ... [with her] extraordinary Beauty, together with her sweet Temper. "In the west, women of the British Isles were the popular prey. On setting out on the *corso* in 1636, the Algerian Aligolant Re'is supposedly ordered his crew to set sail for "ye English Channel, for taking of English women being of more worth than other[s]."[S]

The high esteem that Muslims put on female slaves translated into higher prices at the market. This turns up in the redemptive catalogues, which indicate that those few women who were ransomed typically fetched around 10 percent to 20 percent more than men of similar backgrounds. In part, no doubt, this was because Muslim masters were aware that the priests of the Catholic ransoming orders often had explicit directions "to ransom first and quickest the boys, girls, and women, as those who stood most in danger of ... of losing the Holy Faith," and were consequently willing to pay more if that would get them out quickly? Yet the redemptive fathers were not the only ones willing to pay premium prices for Christian slave women. By all indications, Muslims in the *hadestan* also competed against each other and against Jews to have the best female slaves, who in some Ottoman cities, had a special market set aside just for their buying and selling.

Clearly, slave women in Mediterranean societies had a value in their own right, a good indication that they also had special roles and purposes in that world. The most notorious of these roles were, of course, the sexual ones. In the Ottoman lands, maintaining a large harem of attractive women was a matter of passion and pride for a man of rank and means; like keeping a big stable of horses, it was a marker of status, though not so publicly proclaimed. Muslims of means were permitted to have up to four wives, but it was also customary' to keep concubines in the harem. In this, as in so much else, the model, if not exactly the ideal, of all lesser harems was the great harem of the sultan. There were actually two of these imperial harems bracketing the Muslim world at opposite ends of the Mediterranean, and they were both enormous. One was maintained by the Grand Seigneur in Constantinople and the other by the sultan, or *moulay, of* Morocco. It took a prodigious number of women to make a harem genuinely royal, and ordinary men could only gossip about such institutions with a kind of wonder and trepidation. Some may have let a certain bitterness intrude into their awe: in his report of 1676 on the Turkish sultan

Mehmet IV, the Venetian ambassador Giacomo Querini went from purely reportorial to rather peevish and censorious:

> The women remain in three guarded seraglios. That is, in the new [one] there could be around 320 women; in the old one, 400 or more women past their prime ... slaves of the dead Sultans, the nurses of the princelings, and others who, for punishment or humiliation are locked up there; and in the third, at Adrianople, [are] around 300. And this mob of hellish women, for the agitation of the soul and the dissoluteness and lasciviousness of the body, are incarnated and transformed into demons.[10]

Querini was actually reporting during a period of relative decline for the Ottoman harem, since by all accounts Memhet IV was less interested in concubines than in hunting. Earlier Venetian ambassadors, including Ottaviano Bon, claimed that Turkish sultans in the 16th and early 17th century kept upwards of 2,000 slave women. The *moillay of* Morocco assembled a collection of women that was on much the same scale. According to Dominique Busnot writing in the 1710s, Moulay Ismail (1645-1727) may have "religiously" accepted that, "his Law ... reduces the Number of his Principal Wives to Four, [but] it sets no bounds to the number of his Concubines, or inferior Wives. His *Seraglio* at this Time, contains about Five hundred of all Nations." This was, of course, when Moulay Ismail was in his 70s. When he was younger and presumably more spry, he was said to have kept around 2,000 women in several harems.

It was a full time job, acquiring and maintaining a monstrous harem. Candidates for enrollment were collected in various ways. The sultan would never stoop to buying his concubines in the public market, of course. Instead, girls suitable for the Ottoman elite had to be chosen young and extensively trained for their role. As Lady Mary observed, this, as well as their arrival from distant lands, made such girls enormously expensive—a young captive with good potential might easily cost 10 times an ordinary working slave, male or female. Sultans interested in building their harems consequently had their agents at work in the borderlands where women were reputed to be the most beautiful. For the Grand Seigneur this meant Poland, Lithuania, and, above all, Circassia. At the same time, pretty young girls

formed part of the elaborate network of gift exchange that served to curry recognition and repay favors within the empire. Ambassador Bon mentioned the process in his "Description of the Seraglio":

> Those who are held in the place of the beauties (that is, the harem] are all maids of foreign nations, having been taken or stolen ... Many of them are then given to the sultan as most noble presents, as virtuous and most esteemed virgins. And of these in such a manner the number grows ever)' day, according to how they are sent as presents, by the Tartars, by pashas, and by other great ones, to the sultan and to the sultana.[11]

It was understood in both Morocco and Turkey that the sultan could have anything he asked for; in a certain sense everything belonged to him already. As a result, when these states were ruled by men who had a real passion for harem building—Moulay Ismail was particularly mentioned in this regard—many a pasha or grandee who happened upon an especially charming she-slave would do his best to keep news of her hidden, and even spirit her out of town. Otherwise, the sultan might hear of this new acquisition and, through more or less subtle hints, force him to give the girl up, "as a present." Girls were brought into Constantinople from Circassia or Lithuania in secret, and also at a very young age, so they could be trained to the wishes of their master or mistress. Hill claimed, for example, that no girl was "admitted into the Seraglio after eight years old, so that the Sultan may not be deceiv'd as to her being innocent from even a thought of man." Once arrived, according to Bon:

> They came to be served by other women according to their needs, such that they do not want for anything. They have their places to retire for lessons, to learn to read and speak Turkish, and to sew and to play [instalments], and with their teachers, who are older women, they live and stay all day, with some hours of recreation, because they do not lack gardens and pleasures as much as they want of them.[12]

With so many ways available to build them, it is no surprise that sultans could create royal harems of a size and grandeur that far exceeded anything that even the wealthiest and most ambitious of

courtiers, military leaders, or corsair princes could dream of. In reality, many of the men who actually ran the empire, fought its battles or worried about its finances, seem to have had little time for such hobbies. More than a few of them apparently ended up with just a single wife and perhaps the odd mistress or two. Still, Constantinople and some of the other great cities of the empire were home to a good many harems that, if smaller than the royal paragons, were still of respectable size—from 10 or 20 wives and concubines up to as many as 100.

One factor mitigating against a large or diverse harem—as many of these men were well aware—was that the result could be a fractious household riven with tension and hostility. New acquisitions who had charmed the master could arouse bitter resentment among aging wives or concubines struggling to hold onto their fading power and influence. In such circumstance, as one male slave put it, "they make no scruple of murder, neither of infants is it enquired after." In the royal harems this problem was addressed, though not always solved, by keeping the favorites in their own, separate apartments, while lodging the rank-and-file in:

> Women's housing, [where] one lives as is done in the convents of adult nuns ... [with] their refectories and very' long dormitories, where up to a hundred of them are placed. They sleep on sofas placed from one end to the other along the hall, such that there remains a very wide path down the middle where one can walk. Their blankets and bed covers are of rough wool carpet, and for every ten of the girls there sleeps an old women ... to prevent them from [doing any] wickedness."

In setting up his grand harem in Meknes, where he had plenty of space to work with, Moulay Ismail was able to diffuse his household's proclivity to scheming and infighting by apportioning the concubines out in a vast series of free-standing sheds, more like an old fashioned motel than a convent. Busnot noted about these royal women that:

> Each of them is Lodg'd apart, under the Guard of an Eunuch and of a Black Woman Slave ... they may not, without the King's [Ismail's] leave, visit one another nor go out of their little sort of Cell, on any other account; and he lately caus'd Fourteen of them

> to have all their Teeth drawn, for having visited one another privately. The Eunuchs, or Black Women that attend them, are to go on all their Errands.[14]

Among lesser Ottoman potentates, such accommodations were difficult to arrange, though certain wealthy Algerians evidently kept some of their women in the city and others in dormitory-like structures on their *masseries*. It was commonly believed by European observers that the harem's potential for troubles was a primary reason—beside their supposed tendency towards dissoluteness—that many well-off Muslims learned to direct their passions towards slave boys and young men. These, it was said, were less vicious in their scheming than women, and, since they could not breed, they were less likely to commit mayhem on behalf of their children. The French traveler Laugier de Tassy observed that, as far as sodomy went:

> The Deys, the Beys, and the great Men [of Algiers), have practiced it, especially since it has been discovered, that several of their Predecessors were destroyed by their Mistresses, whose Place is, at present, supplied by young and handsome [male] Slaves.[15]

Even if not all the "great Men" in Turkish lands maintained extensive collections of concubines, every Muslim household with any pretensions had a harem—that closed off, women's space that was forbidden to all men except the master and a few of his most trusted male relatives. This central structural feature of Muslim life was what gave such importance to female slaves. No one else could take care of wives or concubines in these closed conditions except other women, whose labor was required for a whole range of necessary household work, from grooming, clothing, entertaining, and childcare to more mundane tasks at cleaning and serving meals. When she visited various elite women in Adrianople and Constantinople, Lady Mar}' ignored the lowly "creatures" who did these jobs, just as she no doubt looked right through servants back home in London—but we know they were there. Writing of his master, Ali Pegelin, Emanuel d'Aranda mentioned that to run his harem the great man had "twenty Women-slaves, Christians, who waited on his wife. But they were not often seen, in regard they come very seldom out of their lodging."[16]

Figure 14-3 Wife of Ottoman official, traveling in seclusion. Olfert Dapper, *Naukeurige Beshrvinge der Afrikaensche Gewesten* (Amsterdam, 1676).

It may seem excessive that Ali Pegelin's one wife needed 20 women to care for her alone—perhaps they were concubines as well?—but it is apparent that each of the wives of important men in the Ottoman world expected to have a great many slave women, young and old, to care for them and their children in the seclusion in which they were expected to pass their lives (see Figure 14.3). Such female establishments were commonplace in cities like Algiers, Constantinople, Aleppo, and Cairo, each with its own *bashaliq* courts, military establishments, and merchant communities, all of them crowded with powerful men and elite households. Each of these had its own harem, each with its slave staff of a half dozen, or 10, or 20 serving women to attend to the needs of the elite wives kept within—some hundreds or thousands of female slaves doing all the work that men were not permitted to do.

This is not the end of it, however. Whenever they could afford to, lesser folk also tried to get themselves a female slave or two, to carry

out many of the same sort of tusks that housemaids did in Europe. If the term made any sense, we could call these the petit bourgeois of the Ottoman world. The French slave Chastelet des Boys spent some time in such a home, after an Arab purchased him in the market and give him to his sister, a widow who was "not so young nor so well formed." In this little household there were just four residents: the widow and her young son, a female African slave, and Chastelet himself. Leaving his négrine colleague to care for their mistress's person, Chastelet handled other tasks that in a richer household with a proper harem would probably have been the responsibility of female slaves:

> We lived on rather good terms, without [her] begrudging us more or less work; my ordinary task was nothing more than to fetch water from the neighboring fountain to clean up and make suitable the residence, and the rest of the day [I had to] carry' around in my arms a young child of two or three years.[17]

When we add all these lesser harems to the more famous seraglios of the sultans—which were themselves subdivided into the private harems of the ruler's mother, sisters, and daughters, each with their own slave retinue—the sheer extent of Ottoman female slavery becomes evident, and somewhat daunting. Considering the number of harems, large and small, that flourished in the big Ottoman cities between 1500 and 1800, could anything less than 10,000 women have worked in all of them at any one time? Probably the number would be much higher, if we took into account those household slaves of non-European or non-Christian origin, from Africa or Asia, or their many sisters who were tied in bondage as singers, dancers, or prostitutes owned by private entrepreneurs and rented out. Still others—hundreds or thousands?—could have easily disappeared, like Violetta Laranda almost did into Beduin hands, or been traded to lands and peoples further east.

How many new female captives or purchases would have been necessary to keep steady a servile harem population of even 10,000? As with male slaves, we can reach an approximation for that figure by looking at the attrition rates that would have brought female slave populations down. The numbers of harem women would obviously decline for very different reasons than did those of men working out in

the world at large. Cloistered as they were, these women and girls would have avoided the very real dangers that constantly threatened male slaves—no heavy work in the galleys or construction sites for them. Of course, even the most cosseted concubine or harem girl could die young, under the blows of her master, a guardian eunuch, or other slave women. We have seen how Moulay Ismail pulled the teeth out of concubines who disobeyed his orders; supposedly he slaughtered others for the most trifling offenses. It is likely that, however fraught and tense their cloistered lives might get, harem women were less likely to die of violence or poisoning than of epidemic diseases. From what we know of practices in cities like Constantinople and Algiers, though, it seems that at the first sign of plague the wealthier masters moved their entire household to the relative safety of a country estate.

In other words, slave women in Ottoman lands probably passed lives that were safe, if boring, with a good chance to reach greater ages than male slaves or anything they could have hoped for back in Christendom. Still, for women in the great imperial harems there was another form of attrition at work, one that removed women as efficiently as any epidemic. Although most European men took it for granted that the purpose of the harem was to gratify the sultans' overdeveloped libido, its nominal function for those who lived in it was the production of children. Sultan Murat III (1546-1595) supposedly fathered 103 sons and daughters off his harem of 1,200 young women, and though few others could claim such productivity, several score offspring were by no means uncommon. Yet children were not only to be conceived and birthed in the harem, but raised there as well. To encourage their fecundity, young women who bore the sultan a son were set up in their own private apartment, with personal slave servants. For each child they produced, the status of these women typically improved, a point of aspiration for all new girls entering the harem. With their slave servants, entertainers, and companions, such concubines broke the vast ranks of the harem into a cluster of female villages.

These fortunate and fertile women, presumably, stayed at the center of their sultan's harem throughout their lives. So did others who won his favor, as companions and entertainers, or as teachers and governesses for the next generation of concubines. Those who, one way or another, failed in this contest of life—who never got pregnant, or

produced only girls, or somehow failed to catch the sultan's eye—these women had to be moved on out of the way, to make room for new candidates. In Constantinople they were sent across the Golden Hom to the Old Seraglio, which served "as a prison to receive at each triennial [rejview of the Grand Seignor's women, whole shoals of barren, sick, or antiquated ladies." So said Aaron Hill, but he probably understated the case, since many fairly young concubines were also sent to the Old Seraglio, in a passage that meant they were banished from the court, but also that they could be married to less exalted mortals, which many of them happily did. Over in Morocco, Moulay Ismail sloughed off his excess women in a similar fashion. "When those Women are about Thirty years of Age, they are sent to an old *Seraglio* at *Fez* or at *Tafilet,* with their Children ... and so he recruits his Seraglio." As a result, Busnot observed, "This great Number of Women [was] always young, by being renew'd from Time to Time."[18]

The process of removal and renewal that Hill and Busnot recorded meant that the seraglio of the sultan's prime beauties was being continually emptied, either into their own apartments or into superannuation. And while these concubines quickly aged beyond the point of desirability, their masters had no such limit and might continue to seek new recruits until quite late in life. Joseph Morgan told the tale of how the famed corsair admiral Kher-ed-din Barbarossa, "notwithstanding he was more that eighty Years old, passed his Days and Nights with his fairest She-Slaves. But carrying too far his Debauch, he was found dead in his Bed of these Excesses."[19]

Coming in at around age eight years old, in other words, most women were gone from the "Seraglio of the Beauties" no more than 20 years later—much sooner if they succeeded in producing a son for the Grand Seigneur. These young women would have to be replaced, as would older slaves who died, were married off, or transfer into other work. Their attrition rate over all was probably around 10 percent per year, meaning that the sultans would have needed to recruit between 100 and 200 girls and women a year if they were to keep the various harems filled to their capacity of 1,000 or 2,000 women of all ages and activities.

The same must have been true, though to a lesser extent, in the smaller harems, where aging concubines, "if they turned out sterile," were by custom traded or sold off as nurses, seamstresses, or prostitutes,

even as younger replacements had to be found for them. Unlike the sultans, who could find their girls at a tender age and have them secured by agents or sent as presents, those who maintained more middling harems had to compete for their slave girls in the women's slave market, the Avret *Pazary.* Despite Lady Mary's claim that there one could only buy "miserable, awkward, poor wretches ... [unjworthy to be your housemaids," a great many buyers went to the public slave market in Constantinople for just that purpose. Ottaviano Bon described the market during its heyday, just over a century before Lady Mary disparaged it:

> For such a purpose there is an enclosed, public market in Constantinople, in which at open auction each Wednesday [female] slaves of every sort are bought and sold, and everybody freely goes there to buy them. Some for nursemaids, some for servants, and some for the use of their [sexual] whims, since those who avail themselves of slave girls for sexual matters cannot be punished by the law, as would be the case with free women or especially with Turkish women. And these slave girls are bought and sold as one does with other animals, in the sense that they are judged by their bodies, by their country of origin, and they are examined carefully all over, so that [the buyer] is not swindled. They purchase ... [them] without any [feeling] of constraint for [the woman's] reputation or honor, for love, or for modesty, but only in that manner that is convenient for the buyer and the seller. And when a girl is a virgin and beautiful, she is held for a very high price, [they] pay for these quite a bit more than for the others. The seller is obliged by his guarantee of that condition [her virginity]: he not only has to repay the selling price if she turns out not to be a virgin, but Jhe is] also condemned for fraud.[40]

By the time Lady Mary saw the women's slave market, in 1717, it was apparently much declined. In Bon's day, and especially during the 16th century, the Avret *Pazary* was booming, filled with women brought in by corsairs, Tartars, and sundry slave dealers. Judging by the number and size of state and private harems, not just in Constantinople but all over the Ottoman lands, it seems that at a minimum these merchants in female bondage would have needed to capture and sell at least 1,000 women and girls a year just to maintain this

enclosed population. As we have seen with the men, such numbers could add up. It would be safe to say that 200,000 or 300,000 European women were taken into slaver)' in Muslim hands between 1500 and 1800. Added to these was a larger number—probably much larger, in fact—of Black African women, brought over the slave routes from the south and sold into households from Algiers to Constantinople.

It appears, then, that perhaps 10 percent or 20 percent of the Christians enslaved by Muslims were women. If this was so, then why are only 3 percent or 4 percent of those on the ransom lists female? The answer, of course, is that these published catalogues only listed those slaves who were actually ransomed. Clearly a great many female slaves were not offered for ransom, presumably because their masters had no interest in letting them go, even at a good profit. These slave owners were no doubt aware, especially in the later 17th and 18th centuries, that, as land raids were becoming less frequent, so also were the preponderance of slave women these attacks could produce. This meant fewer women in the slave markets available for purchase to do the many harem jobs that only they could do. Shortage and specialization, in other words, gave slave women a particular value, one that went beyond the usual worth that either prestige of ownership or potential profit of resale could provide.

Although there was an eager market for Christian women in Ottoman lands, not all of them ended up in a harem. A glance at the published redemption catalogues soon makes it clear that certain sorts of women were likely to regain their freedom, while others were held back by their owners. We can see, for example, that a significant percentage of the names on ransom lists are of gentlewomen. Such women were typically captured as passengers on European ships, often in company with their serving maids or companions. Generally, everyone who dealt with them—from the *re'is* who captured them, to the pasha or *cley* who almost inevitably took them as part of his eighth share, to any *Tagarin* through whose hands they might pass—regarded them more as high value hostages than as actual slaves. The whole point in taking them was for the ransom they might bring, and there was never any question they would actually be put to work. If some of them were treated a bit roughly—temporarily deprived of their maids, perhaps—this was just to get them to put more urgency into their letters home, so their relatives would hurry up with the ransom. For the

most part, these ladies could expect to spend their relatively brief captivities in cosseted comfort—"well entertained till they are ransomed," as one French observer put it. Some of them even left the pasha's palace and took lodgings with a friendly European consul, so they could pass their weeks or months of exile in sympathetic company.

Not all those women who show up on the ransom lists were of gentle birth. Over the course of the 17th century, as the redemptive orders increased their charitable reach, they were able to free increasingly large numbers of women from modest and sometimes impoverished backgrounds. Still, the catalogues reveal a certain logic about whom masters were offering for ransom and whom they wanted to keep. We soon notice, for example, that many women were ransomed together with their husbands, or—when they are identified as "widows"—with their children. Evidently they were captured as part of a family group, sometimes no doubt on board a ship, but probably more often *prose* per *terra,* or taken in a land raid. The Trinitarian Pierre Dan, among others, claimed that in the slave market "women were separated from the husbands and children from their fathers," and this may have sometimes happened, but the lists also tell another story. Masters seem to have not been especially keen about holding on to, or perhaps even buying, female slaves who were burdened with families. Perhaps they reasoned that such a woman would have had too much loyalty to her husband or children to ever find a place in the harem, either as a concubine or a serving slave. It is also possible that the redemptive orders, eager above all to free Christian children, made it worth a master's while to sell off the whole family at once, rather than hang on to part of it. In either case, being taken as part of a family appears to have greatly helped a woman's chance of eventually getting free.[21]

Things were correspondingly grim for women and girls captured on their own. These were the ones, especially if they were without wealth or connections, who ended up destined for the harem. We know very little about their experiences at this juncture, though there was a brutal inevitability about what they could expect. As one observer noted, "if they were beautiful and virginal, most of them were violated." The rest, according to Ottaviano Bon, "if they turn out to be sterile, they can be sold, and can pass from hand to hand, through as many households as their fortune would dictate." There was only a brief period, before this degrading process of enslavement got properly underway,

that such women might still hope to set a ransom and appeal for help. A few of their letters survive, such as one sent from a certain Maria Marchiona, of Fermo on the Adriatic coast of Italy, in 1666:

> My dearest Father, I salute You,
> I come with the present [letter! with tears in my eyes ... to give you news that for my bad fortune 1 find myself a slave here in Dulcigno, in the hands of Sig. Audischura.. He has agreed [with] me to set my ransom at 160 [Venetian] *zucchini,* and I thus come to beg you with tears of blood that for the love of God and for as much love as you bear me, do not fail to make every effort to raise this ransom, by selling all the poor [property] that we have to free me from these hands and by going begging and seeking alms for a poor slave girl. And don't be disturbed about my honor, because 1 am clear and pure as my mother made me. Only for the love of God take care to free me as soon as possible, because my master says that if the ransom does not come quickly, he wants to sell me to Barban' or he wants me to convert, and for this 1 again pray to you with tears in my eyes that you do not abandon me to such calamities, and to remind you that I am your blood in the hand of the Turks. That is all, except I commend myself to everyone, big and small, for the love of God.
> Your most disconsolate daughter, Maria[22]

Maria, at least, came from a family with some slight savings and possessions. Women from truly poor backgrounds were simply written off by those at home, given up as lost by relatives and fellow villagers. While male slaves might find opportunities, however slim, to work, beg, or steal enough to eventually ransom themselves, women stuck in the harem had virtually no chance to earn their way to freedom. Instead, they stayed in their secluded world until they died, passing their days in the comfortable if boring routine of providing companionship and care for their equally confined mistresses. Only when their owners came close to death was there some hope for freedom—both Christian and Muslim masters might release their slave women from bondage in their wills, as an act of charity.

Such a charitable gesture may have been behind the redemption of 21 elderly Austrian women in 1728. These survivors had been found by the Trinitarians in Constantinople and Edirne, quite possibly in

the imperial harems located in those two cities. Their names, together with enough sparse details to get some sense of their story, appear at the end of a much larger redemption list from that year. According to the catalogue, all of the women came from small villages in eastern Austria or western Hungary, mostly within a short distance of Vienna; they ranged in age from 56 to 79 years old. All of them were taken into slavery 47 years earlier, in 1681, which makes it appear that they were enslaved on the same occasion. This was very likely during a raid carried out by Ottoman troops, in the preliminary skirmishes that culminated in the second Turkish siege of Vienna—the villages all lay along the front then existing between the Ottoman and Hapsburg armies. When the Turkish siege was broken in 1683, all these girls, some as young as nine or ten years old, were carried off by their retreating captors. Once arrived back in the Ottoman capital, they were either selected by the sultan or sold to interested buyers.

These, of course, were just the ones who had survived decades of captivity, while holding firm to their faith. Almost certainly the overwhelming majority of those enslaved during that long-forgotten raid of 1681 had either converted or died by 1728, leaving behind only this pitiable remnant. Quite possibly, someone in the imperial court decided to take advantage of the great redemption organized by the Trinitarians that year and offered the fathers this clutch of old women for free. Perhaps it was a gesture made in the spirit of charity, or perhaps the slaves had simply become useless and burdensome, taking up room that could have been occupied by younger women. In any case, after spending nearly half a century in confinement, these 21 women suddenly found that freedom had been thrust upon them.

One can imagine this little group, almost blinking in the abrupt light of liberty. Yet, what were they to do, with what remained of their lives? Once brought back to their villages—no longer on the borderlands but deep in the heart of Austrian territory—what family or support would they have found, after half a century of separation? What work could they do, when most of them had known no other life but that of the harem, with its particular rhythms and rituals? At least the Trinitarians were experienced enough in the ransoming business to recognize and sympathize with their plight. Before their names in the index, someone noted that all 21 of them “are [to be] sustained

at the expense of the Religion [i.e., the Trinitarians] as long as they live, due to their advance age."[23]

Until slave women got old enough to get in the way, their owners were often nervous that their local pasha or dey might strike an agreement behind their back with one of the ransoming agencies, arranging for a general redemption that would strip them of precious harem slaves. Even if the deal included a significant return on their original investment, masters might still be unhappy to lose slaves that had become familiar and even trusted members of their household. In the larger, better-off homes, which could be populous, complex communities, it was easy and even customary for slave women to get absorbed into the social network, especially if they had been seduced or raped by the master and bore him a son. Ambassador Bon stressed this point, noting that "When the female slaves bear children, they can no longer be sold, but they are understood to be members of the family, in which they have to live until they die."[24]

With so many tasks in harem society that could only be performed by girls and women, even childless slaves remained valuable. It was enough for a slave woman to be good at the work she did to convince her master (and especially her mistress) that it was worth going to any lengths to keep her. This was why some slave owners tried so tenaciously to get their female slaves to convert to Islam. As we have seen, there was some ambiguity in the minds of masters about the conversion of a male slave, since it customarily ruled out his doing the grubbier sorts of jobs and ended all chances of his eventual redemption. With a female slave, however, only those who had bought her specifically as an investment for ransom would have opposed her embracing Islam. For other women and girls, whether they were destined to be concubines, companions, or servant slaves, conversion was a priority. This was a master's main insurance against some ransoming agency eventually hearing of her—even buried deep in the harem—and persuading or bribing the dey or pasha to order her sale back to Christendom. Even if a forced ransom was not an immediate threat, there was always the fear that a well-meaning missionary might find a way to make contact with a harem slave, especially a newly captured one. We have letters that such men wrote hack to their headquarters in Rome about this struggle over female souls, as they bemoaned how masters would not let their female slaves "confess, nor hear Mass, nor

even talk with Christians, a truly miserable situation and worthy of compassion.”"[37]

Yet, by encouraging her to remain steadfast in her Christianity, perhaps slipping her some printed orations or prayers, the priest, wittingly or not, was introducing discord into what should have been a harmonious household community. A slave’s stubborn refusal to abandon the outmoded faith of her birth seemed to many owners as the ultimate disloyalty to her new family. All this unpleasantness could be avoided, however, if she were persuaded to embrace Islam. The missionaries would stop coming around, the ransoming agencies would give up, and the harem could go on in peace.

Such peace was not always achieved without a struggle. The Flemish slave Emanuel d’Aranda underscored the point in a little tale he titled, “The Constancy and perseverance of a Christian Slave in her Religion.” It seems that in 1641, while d’Aranda was a slave, the corsairs captured a Spanish bark from which the captain had managed to flee, though in his cabin he left behind his concubine. Brought back to Algiers, the woman was picked by the pasha as part of his customary *[icnjic,* apparently at the urging of his wife, who was obviously unconcerned that this was not an “honorable” woman. On the contrary, in very short order the pasha’s wife announced that she “was very’ well pleas’d with her,” in particular because this new acquisition quickly proved herself to be “an excellent Needle-woman, good at embroidery’, and other things of that kind.” Although the Spanish concubine was legally her property, the pasha’s wife apparently felt the need to bind the woman to her more securely. Perhaps it was because of some personal affection, though more likely she realized that her husband might someday succumb to the temptations of politics or profit, to take back his gift and, for example, ransom her to the Spanish Trinitarians. The obvious way to cement their connection was to get the Embroideress to convert, and to do so the pasha’s wife tried both the carrot and, quite literally, the stick:

> [She] promised her mountains of Gold; if she would renounce her Faith and embrace the *Turkish* Religion. But all her temptations prov’d ineffectual, for she said to her that “... all my hope is in my Faith, which 1 will never forsake or renounce." The Mistress hearing this answer was at a loss between astonishment and

> indignation; so that she gave order that the poor Slave should receive three hundred blows with a Cudgel. And perceiving that she still continu'd firm and constant as a Rock, they stripp'd her bare of all her cloathes, and gave her others after the Turkish mode; which she put on, but protested publickly in the presence of God, that she took them only to cover her nakedness, and not for any change of religion.*[26]

D'Aranda ended his story as he began it, expressing his satisfaction that he was able to "shew the constancy and faith of that second Magdalen." Yet we can also see here a cautionary tale that summed up the choices presented to many female slaves, in both Muslim and Christian lands. When d'Aranda had his Embroideress respond to her abusers that '"all my hope is in my Faith,'" she was not only speaking about her hopes for eternal salvation. As she was no doubt well aware, holding fast to Christianity was also her only chance for redemption on earth, since once she gave up her religion, the door for any eventual ransoming would be firmly closed. Muslims, and presumably most Christians, understood that those who performed the (very) simple ceremony of conversion had chosen to go down a one-way street, where no reneging was allowed, however hasty, ill-conceived, or forced the original decision may have been. Renouncing one's conversion to Islam and returning to Christianity was theoretically a capital crime in the Ottoman world. Anyone who encouraged or assisted such abjuring also risked death, so missionaries and the ransoming fathers, who were generally quite keen on harvesting new converts, tended to steer well clear of wavering renegades. Even a master was forbidden from ransoming his converted slave back to the Christian world—this was virtually the only restriction imposed on his free ownership. Presumably once she returned, she would resume her Christianity, making him guilty of the impious and capital crime of encouraging a fellow Muslim to leave the land, and the faith, of Islam.

D'Aranda's embroideress apparently proved constant in her faith, though we have no way of knowing for how long. On the other hand, a good many women and girls who found themselves in her position decided either that they had no reason to fight back or were not up to the task. They must have realized that abandoning their Christianity reduced their chances of ever seeing their homeland

again to practically zero. Still, many of them apparently gave in, and it was not just because of "weakness and fear of threats and penalties," as more than one missionary rather unfairly claimed. Instead, many female slaves had a particular consideration to weigh in their choice. Those women who bore children, whether they were more-or-less recognized concubines or had just casually been raped by their master, were under considerable pressure to embrace Islam. Law and custom dictated that children born in Muslim lands had to be raised in the faith of the Prophet, and if a mother refused to convert, her children were taken away and raised by another. It also quickly became obvious to many slaves that motherhood was the path to power in the Muslim harem, though only for those who had accepted the faith.[27]

At the same time, the master was quite possibly under some particular pressure of his own to get the mother of his child to convert. So at least asserted one 17th-century Trinitarian priest, who claimed that "Their laws command that every Turk who would carnally know a Christian woman, free or slave, should be put to death, unless the Christian denies her Catholic Faith and puts herself under the Muhammadan law." It is doubtful that such laws could have been regularly enforced, especially against powerful masters who maintained large harems. Nevertheless, it is also likely that they provided still further incentive to "treat the [slave! women very badly to get them to apostatize their faith." Through such violence, ironically enough, a master might protect his name as a good Muslim.[28]

The life of those women who chose Islam depended a great deal—as it did back in Christendom—on their intelligence, ingenuity, beauty, and good luck. Many thousands of them sank into placid drudgery, passing lives they would not have chosen in duties that were probably neither too bitter nor too painful. A few, however, found wealth, power, and love, revealing in the process those self-fashioning possibilities that have defined our notions of success since the days of *Mille et tine nuils.* A central myth of women in slavery treats of the low-born woman who, thanks to her special qualities, finds more options available as a slave of Muslims than as a free woman among Christians. Perhaps it is just because we know so little about the day-to-day female experience of slavery that we cling to the Cinderella stories of the few glittering successes, stories of a woman who with

only charm and brains ended up controlling a powerful Muslim lord who took her as a slave but ended up a captive himself.

Such rags-to-riches tales abound. The archetype of them all was known to the Turks as Hurrem Sultan, the only wife of Suleiman the Magnificent. Given the nickname Roxelana, or "the Ukrainian," she was bom near Lviv around 1510 and supposedly captured soon thereafter by the Crimean Tartars. Sold into the seraglio, she quickly won Suleiman's heart. Thanks both to her admirable fecundity—she bore the sultan five children—and her unabashed ambition, Roxelana gained the upper hand among all the women of the seraglio, to the extent that Suleiman eventually decided to take the unprecedented step of freeing and then marrying her. For the rest of her life, she ruled much as other queens did, insuring, among other things, that there was peace between the Sublime Porte and her native Poland.

Other slave women followed the example of Roxelana. The Spanish slave Doha Ines de la Cisternas, captured in the 1680s, was courted and converted by the *(ley* of Algiers; in time her power grew to the point that she became known as "La Reine d'Alger." Even more famous was an English girl captured in 1685 by the Salé rovers at the age of just 15 years old. When she was taken, her background was so humble that no one thought to even learn her name, but things changed when she was brought to Meknes. She soon caught the eye of Morocco's wild ruler Moulay Ismail, "who overcame her constancy [to Christianity! by causing her to be cruelly Whipp'd, and her feet to be put into hot Oil to oblige her to turn Mahometan." Once the girl had converted, however, Moulay Ismail married her and made her both his *sultana* and his ambassadress to England. Later in life she was commonly known as *Lala Bailees,* or "the Queen of Sheba."[29]

There is something satisfying about these stories of women who came from nothing and made it to unimaginable power in the face of ferocious odds and opposition, opposition often coming from their fellow harem girls. There is also something intriguing about the girls who danced and sang for Lady Mary Wortley Montagu—their thoughtless and childlike sensuality has kindled pleasure over the centuries and inspired no end of "Orientalist" paintings. But though our thoughts linger over the harem and fill with its scent of languor and intrigue, we give little mind to those women, more typical and more numerous by far, who kept the whole operation going. Many of them

refused to convert to Islam, or, having converted, received no special favor for their choice. They were eagerly sought after and tenaciously held by their masters and mistresses, but for outsiders and for history they have been silent and invisible. Lady Elizabeth Craven mentioned them not at all when she came to pay a call at the villa of the "Capitan Pasha's" wife, but consciously or unconsciously she must have been struck by the results of their constant and humble work, since she enthused of the place that "You can conceive of nothing so neat and clean to all appearance as the interior of this Harem ... there is not a speck of sand or dirt within doors."[30]

CHAPTER 15

THE PASSION OF PIERRE DAN

On July 12, 1634, a French diplomatic mission set off from Marseilles, bound for the Barbary coast and the Regency of Algiers. The expedition was headed by a royal envoy, Sanson Le Page, "first Herald of the French Armies," and by the Reverend Pierre Dan, Bachelor of Theology, University of Paris, and Minister Superior of the Order of the Holy Trinity. Cardinal Richelieu, chief minister *of* Louis XIII, had personally charged these men with the delicate job of negotiating a new peace between France and the pasha of Algiers. One had been worked out in 1628 under Le Page's predecessor, Sanson Napollon, but it had quickly collapsed in a wave of prize taking, slaving, and recriminations on both sides. By the mid-1630s, as the French faced increasing difficulties with their endless war in Germany, Richelieu figured it was time to stop the constant attrition between French and Algerian corsairs. A generation earlier, it would have been enough to strike such accords with the Grand Seigneur in Istanbul. The sultan would then have commanded his pasha in Algiers to order the city's *re'is* to lay off attacking French coasts and shipping, and they in turn would have found new targets for their looting and slaving. By the 1630s, however, the sultan had lost all practical control over Algiers and even over his own pasha, so it was necessary for the French to have their embassy deal directly with the source of their problems.

And problems there were. As long as the French had been hostile to Hapsburg Spain, they had enjoyed a privileged relationship with the sultan and his minions, on the timeless principle of *I'ennemi de mon ennemi.* These old alignments came to an end with the Thirty Year's War and the weakening of Ottoman power. The western

Mediterranean tumbled into a free-for-all of corsairs, pirates, armed merchants, and state navies preying on anyone they could get. The Algerians in particular enjoyed open season on everyone, since major powers like the French, Dutch, Hapsburgs, and British were too distracted by wars and civil wars to mount proper punitive expeditions against the corsair capital. According to one report, the French alone had in six years' time lost:

> Just to the city of Algiers, without talking of prizes made at the same time by those of other Corsair Towns, like Tunis, Salé, & Tripoli, [no fewer than! eighty vessels, ships, polacres, barks, and tartans ... out of which have been captured and taken to Algiers 1,331 persons, all of them Slaves ... from the seas and coasts of Brittany, Normandy, Picardy ... Languedoc and Provence."[1]

In all fairness, the French had also taken their share of Algerian ships and slaves, but with more merchants on the sea, their losses were greater. Richelieu, always on the lookout for more funds to wage the war in Germany, needed to return the Marseilles and Bordeaux trade to profitability, both for the tax revenue and for national *honneur.* Honor was also a factor in the slave problem. Richelieu had heard the laments of the hundreds of Frenchmen enslaved in Algiers and was well aware of the effect that so many captives—mostly commoners, but a few notables as well—was having on public morale. The Cardinal saw the possibilities, then, when word came from Algiers that the regime's general council, or *Divan,* was interested in exchanging the 1,000 or more French slaves in the city for the Turks and Moors in French hands. He commissioned Sanson le Page to work out a return to the old treaty—the same sort of *laissez faire* that would both free all the French slaves and allow French merchants to resume their valuable work. Pierre Dan was sent along with a load of funds raised by his order, should any of the slaves need to be ransomed.

Their voyage from Marseilles to Algiers was completed in an amazing four days, from July 12-15, 1634—"which certainly [made] our sailors quite astonished and very contented, and us as well, all together." They also arrived on a Saturday, the day that the Divan had its weekly meeting. Pleased at this happy coincidence, the council members sent officers to escort Le Page before them to present his

commission. There were some apparently niggling disputes over whether the French might be allowed to keep flying their flag while in the harbor (they were) and whether they had to surrender their rudder and sails for "safe-keeping" (they did), but then the Divan decided to celebrate, in its way. Criers were sent throughout the city proclaiming, as was customary, that no one should annoy the Ambassador or members of his company, '"under pain of no longer having his head.'" Moreover, the French among the state slaves were excused from their work, the very same labor John Foss was put to almost two centuries later—"forty [men] together made to haul wagons all filled with large stones ... to build the Mole."[2]

As far as good fortune went, however, this was about all the expedition was going to get. As soon as they arrived, Le Page and Dan discovered that they had come between pashas, the old one having just departed and the new one not yet come. Though the Divan effectively—and increasingly—ran Algiers, the sultan's representative remained their executive leader and mouthpiece. Le Page was left to cool his heels for a few days, though Dan seems to have gotten right to work, locating those French slaves who were in private hands and opening negotiations for their ransom.

A few days later, the Grand Seigneur's new viceroy, called Ioussouf Pasha, arrived, rowed into the harbor in two sumptuously outfitted galleys, greeted with what Dan calculated as a 1,500-gun salute. It took hours to get through all the cannonry and an entire week to stage all the festivities and parades required for his installation, but then Ioussouf Pasha finally summoned Le Page and Dan. They were given a short and rather unsatisfactory' audience. As pasha, he told them, he had to get to know his new *pashalik.* Would the French be so kind to come back in a week? The week turned into two, and then to three, leaving the members of the mission cooped up "in the strongest of the violent heats of that country."

When there was another meeting, it was only for the customary exchange of presents. The visitors had brought gifts that boasted the richness of France and the fineness of French crafts: "gold and silver watches, and also a quantity of silk fabric and fine scarlet cloth." It was a display of largess "that greatly pleased the Pasha," though he was not moved to actual reciprocity. Instead, the Algerians gave the French a cow, 6 sheep, 24 chickens, wax candles, and 50 loaves of

bread, "all hot"—which they assured their guests was "how it was most prized among them [the locals] and most to their taste." The French were somewhat put off by the inequality of this exchange, and Dan rather tartly contrasted the two offerings, noting that Le Page had given "generously, neither in bread nor in meat." By now Dan and Le Page had begun to conclude that Ioussouf was "crafty" and "treacherous," noting that, "only the hope of gain had attracted him to Algiers." The word circulated that the pasha had paid the sultan a great deal to buy his post, he was determined to squeeze the most he could from opportunities like Le Page's mission.

From this inauspicious beginning things went rapidly downhill. There was some dispute over who should take off his hat. There was the Ambassador's rather peremptory opening demand that the Algerians hand back everything they had seized since 1628—ships, cargos, and slaves. In exchange, Le Page said, he would give them 68 "Turks" whom the French were holding in the Marseilles galleys. Nonsense, the Pasha replied. "The French having started the hostilities, these were all 'good prizes,"' taken by the corsairs fair and square. In any case, Ioussouf went on, the ships and cargoes, as well as more than half the slaves had already been auctioned off in the market, and to impound all these things and give them back to the French, even in exchange for 68 Turks, would "ruin many individuals who had bought them in good faith."'

According to the English slave Francis Knight, who was in Algiers at the time and reported on the meetings, "Mounsieur de Sampson" (as Knight called him) was in a bind, "having promised his King miracles in the accommodation of the *French* affraies," but lacking any real leverage to budge the pasha. Le Page tried to retrench. Instead of swapping a mere 68 Turks for the entire 1,000 French slaves in Algerian hands, he asked only to exchange for those 342 (Knight said 347) slaves who were held by the state, having not yet been sold. Dan, meanwhile, could see to the 600 or more other French slaves in private hands, using the "great sum of money" he had brought to Algiers to buy them out a few at a time. Ioussouf Pasha had his own game to play, however. At his next meeting with Le Page, according to Dan:

> He underhandedly had many women he knew of come to the door of the *Alcassave* [the Viceroyal Palace] with supposed letters,

> which they said they had received from their husbands, and they cried out *"Charala, Charala,"* which is to say "God's Justice!" demanding that he take their side against us because, they added, the French Galleys had sold their husbands to Malta, and consequently it was quite reasonable that they get them back, before putting any French slaves at liberty. This complaint was heard by the Divan and found just.

Le Page was furious with Ioussouf Pasha's little coup *de theatre,* no doubt because it convinced the Divan that the French had not been playing straight. There was indeed some legitimate question over how many Muslim slaves the French actually were, or had been, holding—Knight, for one, claimed that "400 *Turks* and Moors were in the *Marseillian Galleyes."* Le Page angrily denounced Ioussoufs "perfidy and false schemes," insisting that "no one had sold any Turks to Malta," but doubts remained. Undaunted by such bluster, the pasha tried a new tack and proposed selling all 342 state slaves back to the French, claiming this was what the old pasha had intended all along. Dan insisted that this was no more than a scheme for Ioussouf to enrich himself, at a price for all the slaves that would add up to "more than 100,000 francs." It was a scheme so transparent that even the members of the Divan, who had counted on trading these slaves "to deliver their brother Muhammadans," rejected it. Le Page angrily left the audience.

Then Ioussouf Pasha came up with "a new piece of cunning," designed to improve the human exchange rate. He proposed that the Algerians turn over "as many French as there were Turks in Marseilles," an offer that Le Page rejected out of hand, saying that "he would have all the French (state slaves], and that otherwise this exchange could not be made." The Pasha responded by saying that if Le Page wanted the state slaves he could have them, but that his previous asking price had just doubled.

Le Page was flabbergasted. He had lost control of the negotiations—assuming he had ever had them—and with every audience the number of French slaves on offer went down, even as their price went up. The Algerian corsairs, he and Dan discovered, were just like the "Pirates of the Caribbean"—"Vultures and insatiable Tigers, who only live on prey: they take it everywhere and never give anything back." Looking at things rather sarcastically from the outside, Francis Knight

noted how, in their meetings "Fire and Towe [i.e., kindling] meet together: the *Turkes* furie is as much as the *French* chollor [choler]."[4]

When Ioussouf Pasha received the ambassador the next time, he had a new proposition to make. Since Lc Page insisted on having all the French state slaves released, it would be best, Ioussouf said, "to have the Turkish slaves brought back [to Algiers] before returning the French slaves for which they were dealing." Perhaps finding out how-many Muslim slaves were actually on offer here and who they were made a certain sense, but not to Le Page. Convinced that the offer was "something completely ridiculous, he said in response that it seemed not at all reasonable." He then complained that he "knew all too well that these Barbarians, once they had their Compatriots, would mock him and not bother to negotiate any more." His counter-offer was that the same ship that carried the French slaves to France could pick up "all the Turks in Marseilles" and bring them straight back. The pasha turned that down. Then Le Page offered to personally stand hostage in Algiers, along with two of his companions, as a guarantee of his honor. Pasha Ioussouf turned this down too, and with scant appreciation for Le Page's honor he also raised the price on the French state slaves by another 50 percent?

This was the end of the line for the negotiations. "Sieur Le Page, judging that [the Pasha] was only amusing himself, demanded from the Divan permission to return to France, to give an account of the negotiations to His Majesty." Yet, though he stormed out of the Alcassave, Le Page still had to listen to bitter reproaches from the slaves themselves. When he had first arrived, Knight mockingly recalled, they had "made songs of freedome and extolled the glory of their grand Chevellier to the skies, [butj are now left to condole and to new make their forward reckonings." Even worse, all of Dan's careful negotiations for ransoming the private slaves blew up along with Le Page's temper. The Divan decided that if there were to be no exchange of the state slaves then it would not give private slaves the necessary license and permits to leave either.

The whole pathetic affair of the French negotiations with Algiers in 1634 ended like many other attempts by Christian powers to free their subjects—with misunderstanding, recriminations, and ill will. It took another generation or so until the Trinitarians and Mercedarians became skillful enough buyers—and the Muslim slave owners willing

enough sellers—that such large-scale exchanges and ransoms could, and did, become fairly smooth affairs. Even in the later 18th century when everyone should have known the proper procedure, deals went bad, money was wasted, negotiators were thrown into the *bagno,* and slaves were left to languish unransomed for years. The redemption of slaves brought together a combustible mix of fanatical faith, boundless greed, national honor, and fear, and the successful results of any given expedition, however well funded, were never assured.

Meanwhile, though, the misadventures of Le Page and Dan had not quite finished. According to Knight (Dan left this part out), before giving him permission to depart the Divan (perhaps at Ioussouf Pasha's suggestion) demanded that he lower his flag. He replied, essentially, "Come and do it yourselves.'' The Algerians responded by refusing to give the French back their rudder and sails, which left things in a standoff, with the French stuck in the harbor of "this cursed city" for several more embarrassing days until someone—probably Father Dan himself—thought to bribe the guards and get the sails back in time for a quick getaway, though "it was necessary to take the winds the best one could."[6]

By early October, Sanson Le Page was back in France, trying to explain the fiasco to his masters. Nor surprisingly, Richelieu and Louis decided to put their faith henceforth in military' force, and the French commissioned a new Mediterranean fleet. Starting with only five or six galleys, though, the French admirals had little they could do quickly to curb the Algerian corsairs, though they may have successfully encouraged the *re'is* to direct their attacks towards Christian states less able to defend themselves. The merchants of Marseilles and Bordeaux continued to run up heavy losses, and the number of French slaves held Salé, Algiers, and Tunis had by 1640 grown to nearly 5,000. Only after the death of Richelieu in 1642, and Louis XIII a few months later, was a treaty worked out with the Algerians, in good part because the French were once more at war with the Spanish, favorite enemy and target of the re'is.

Meanwhile, Father Dan and his fellow Trinitarians had been left behind with their chests of silver. "We came to the decision," he recalled, "that we should work on our part to make sure that no one could say that we had gone there uselessly." If they could not do business in Algiers, they reasoned, they would sail east, to "employ a part

Figure 15.1 Trinitarians bargaining for Christian slaves. Pierre Dan, *Histoire de la Barbarie et ses Corsaires* (frontispiece, Paris: Rocolct, 1649).

of our funds at Tunis, for the deliverance of some Frenchmen whom we had heard were Captives there." The pasha in that city turned out to he burdened with some especially useless slaves—Dan mentioned one who was in his 70s, another who was blind—and so he was willing to deal. Still, it took three months of hard bargaining before "it pleased God to give us what we desired"—42 French slaves (see Figure 15.1).[7]

Finally, on April 5, 1635 (at "two hours after noon," Dan specified), the Trinitarians returned to Marseilles, with their meager results. It was not much to show for nine months' hard work, but besides the handful of slaves, there was another, perhaps more positive result. Stung by his experiences in Algiers, where "of all the cities held by the Infidels there are the most Christian captives and they treat them the most cruelly," Father Dan decided to write his own history of "this cursed city," its pashas and corsairs, and their contentious encounters with Christendom. This he did, presenting to the French public 14 years later his *Histoire de Barbaric et de ses Corsaires.* It was an enormous volume, and a highly polemic one: over 500 pages that combined often bitter invective against the Muslim regimes of North Africa with elaborate descriptions of their peoples, economies, and

histories. Whatever its vices or virtues as scholarship, it was unarguably the first comprehensive investigation of this world in French, and one of the first ever written, as valuable for historians today as it was for readers at the time. With it, Pierre Dan managed to convert the bitterness of France's failed diplomacy with Algiers into a monument both to the study of and to the endlessly difficult relationship that persisted between the Muslims and Christians of the Mediterranean.

CHAPTER 16

THE LUCKY OITES

One of the commonest of figures you might have seen in the towns and villages of Early Modern Europe was someone who is completely forgotten today. The collector (or "commissioner," as he was sometimes called) of funds for the redemption of slaves was everywhere in those days. Armed with his license to solicit, and perhaps an official brass medallion as well, each collector had his little lock box, where the coins went. He came to a country parish with some small fanfare, putting up a poster or two and getting a special mention for himself in the Sunday sermon. The local vicar told the parishioners that here was a representative of the redemptive societies, come to record the names of any villagers who had been taken into slavery while also collecting donations for their release. In more populous towns, the office was a permanent one, perhaps carried out by the parish beadle. This worthy, when he was not keeping order in church or taking care of the graveyard, could be seen walking the parish lanes, thrusting his box into open shops and at passersby. Other lock boxes, fixed to a pillar in the church, complemented this effort, with a sign on their lids reminding the faithful to *Remember the Poor Slaves.* Each year at Lent, the special time for atonement and self-denial, priests in the Catholic world were ordered by Rome to stress the need to give. In the larger cities, clerics especially skilled in sermonizing would give whole cycles of sermon cycles on successive Lenten Sundays, all of them hammering on the theme that parishioners should *Remember the Poor Slaves.*

These boxes turned up in the secular world as well. Anywhere that people might be likely to find themselves with a few spare coppers in hand—where the money changers gathered, for example—someone

would think of fixing one to the wall, always under its little sign, *Remember the Poor Slaves.* Meanwhile, governments required their notaries to whisper into the ear of those drawing up their last will that, when settling on their other bequests, they should *Remember the Poor Slaves.* In case an appropriate codicil was added, the notary was also required to report the fact and the amount to the relevant redemption authorities, as soon as the testator had died—least the bequest go missing.

Not a trace of this remains in our modem consciousness, and, if any of the thousands of boxes have survived, probably no one remembers what they were for. Yet for several hundred years, millions of Europeans, especially in the Catholic south, were caught up in this enormous emotional and financial effort to free their fellow citizens from slavery in Muslim hands. Even as far away as Mexico and Peru, the collectors made their rounds and shook their lock boxes, on behalf of the Spanish (and sometimes Amerindian) slaves held captive half a world away in Algiers or Morocco. All the preaching, solicitations, and donations came together to produce a river of silver that flowed for centuries, from the Americas to Europe to Barbary', freeing tens of thousands of captives and establishing many a family fortune in Algiers and Tunis.

Such vast fund-raising was necessary because European slaves were expensive. An ordinary' working man was typically sold in the slave markets of Algiers and Salé for at least twice what he might earn in a year back home as a carpenter, fisherman, or sailor. The Turk or Moor who bought him certainly expected to ransom him for a profit—perhaps double his original sales price, depending on how long he had been enslaved and what condition he was in. A man's ransom might easily exceed three or four times his annual wage, then, though it cost more than that to get free of Barbary. There were a host of authorities—the customs officer, judges, various scribes and translators, the captain of the port, and (for state slaves) the head of the *bagno*—who all had to issue the appropriate licenses and permits, and who each had his hand out. Their charges added another 12 percent or 13 percent to the "first cost," as the original ransom price was called. But this was not all. There were also duties owed on any cash brought into the Barbary' regencies, particularly for ransoming purposes. A good part went to customs, but the pasha, *(ley,* or sultan also took his usual eighth, and this too had to be paid by any slave whose ransom came from Europe

and not from his own labors. Paying off the "second cost" might well set the slave or his ransomers back by an additional third to a half of his initial price.

The gentry, naturally, had to pay more than the commoners for their freedom. The ransoms for nobles, naval commanders, or high clerics could run to 5 or even 10 times as much as those of ordinary sailors or fishermen. There are tales of prelates and pashas on both sides of the Mediterranean who had to come up, literally, with a prince's ransom. For the most part, however, elites had the necessary resources, or at least someone in their family did. Military men could expect help from their king, sultan, or regiment; churchmen could call on their order. As we have seen, those who had wealth and connections, whether Muslim or Christian, could expect to be out of captivity in a year, or two at the most, largely on their own efforts. Often, as Emanuel d'Aranda found, their families had the extra advantage of themselves holding, or knowing someone who held slaves of the other faith, for whom they could he traded.

Such exchanges were fraught with distance and distrust, and things easily could go wrong, even for elites who were trading other elites. Though d'Aranda seems to have had little to do with setting up his own exchange, which was for some high-value Muslim slaves captured by the Flemish, he still had a lot to worry' about when he got to Morocco. Once there, he was stuck for weeks in a noisome *matamoro,* while his agents worked through the actual swap with the Turks held in nearby Gibraltar. It was an elaborate *pas de deux* that resembled a Cold War spy exchange at Checkpoint Charlie.

In working out an exchange, it was best to involve prestigious individuals on both sides, to guarantee that everybody played fair. Yet even the best thought-out plans could still crash land in an expensive legal or diplomatic tangle. So it happened in the fall of 1578, when an Albanian Muslim named Cussein, son of Abdulla of Elbassan (in central Albania), showed up looking for patronage and advice from Giacomo Soranzo, the Venetian ambassador in Constantinople. Cussein's son, Jaia, had been serving in the Ottoman fleet when his ship was captured during a skirmish with the Venetians, who sent him into slavery' as a *galeotto of* their own. As Cussein understood it, the best way to get Jaia back was through an exchange, and with this in mind, he went out and bought himself a freshly captured Christian, "whom I

purchased with my own money to free my son," a certain Pietro from the southern Italian town of Lisena. Having gotten his slave, though, Cussein was apparently uncertain just what he was supposed to do next. He waited around "for quite a long time," and then decided to seek out Venice's representative to the Sublime Porte. Soranzo seems to have been willing to help, telling Cussein "that he should go to Venice together with said Pietro his slave, that he would be given his son, and that his Worthiness [Soranzo] would also give him a letter about this."

With slave and letter in hand, Cussein headed for Venice. Once there, he was told by some ducal secretary "that he should give his Christian into the hands of a gentleman [i.e., a Venetian noble] until his son was freed, and that from this [transaction] a contract would be drawn up." After waiting around for a month, however, "believing that he would have his son in exchange for said Pietro," Cussein was told instead by the Venetians that he needed to come up with "yet another Christian," if he wanted his boy back. Finding himself now "without his son and also without Pietro, his slave," he left Venice and took his case to the Ottoman pasha of Elbasan. The pasha drew up a formal complaint for Cussein to carry to Constantinople and back to Soranzo, who promised in turn to write another letter for him to take back to Venice. What became of Cussein's son after this is unclear. The last we last hear of Cussein, however, he was bitterly complaining that "having in so much time not set free my son, a great wrong was done to me," while also refusing to undertake the expense of another trip to Venice. With another formal petition he instead restated his demands that his boy be freed—or at least that he get his slave back.[1]

Difficult as elites may have found it to free themselves or their relations, for most common folk the task approached the impossible, at least without outside help—and it was the ordinary men and women who made up the overwhelming majority of those enslaved. Ransoms were usually required in cash, and many slaves came from backgrounds where cash had little part in daily life. When people lived hand to mouth, savings were almost unheard of. Many peasants never saw a gold coin in their entire life, while sailors, as a group, were not notorious for putting money aside. When they were paid off at the end of a voyage they tended to spend it like—sailors. Many fishermen also eked

out an existence on the edge of survival. As one Italian observer of the 1670s put it:

> Having no other allowance to live on beyond that which they earn with their own efforts in fishing, they [consider themselves! to have earned well if at the end of the year they do not remain in debt for the money that the Owner of their fishing boats [tartane] pays them, a bit at a time, to stay alive and maintain their poor families.[2]*

Nevertheless, the enslaved and their relatives, even those of very modest means, did what they could when a pasha in Albania or a *Tagarin* in Algiers demanded 200 or so ducats for their freedom. Many of these masters were quite willing to help their slaves, sometimes going beyond simply encouraging (or ordering) them to write letters home. They might let one out of a group of, for example, half a dozen fishermen, all taken together, return home to try to raise ransoms for everyone. It was a tricky process, of course, since the one sent back could always abscond and leave the others in the lurch. Slave-holders were obviously aware of such risks, yet they continued the practice because of its obvious virtues. Especially among those corsairs based in Albania or Tunis, who made something of a speciality of preying on peasants and fishermen in Italy or Sicily, the short sea voyage involved made it practical to send one slave hack home. As an emissary, he could both carry' letters from his companions and describe their plight much more graphically for their relatives. Before he left, he would have to sign a pact with those he left behind, making sure he understood what would happen to them if he failed to return or raise their collective ransom before his allotted deadline ran out. As a group of 10 fishermen from Rimini, held in Dulcigno in 1691, put it:

> Gerolamo Bianchino comes from us with the pledge, which we, the undersigned, have made for [his ransom of] 80 sequins [320 ducats] that he promises and pledges to come back within eight months and bring his ransom and our ransoms, and if not, we will receive all the damage if this man does not return within the said deadline, and we are liable to pay the said [ransom] money, and we will be immediately sold to Barbary, where we will suffer a thousand torments.[3]

Slavers who lived in rather rough-and-ready towns like Dulcigno or Santa Maura also tried to turn their slave emissary into something of a personal shopper, to buy them the kind of high quality craftwares that were produced in Italy but unavailable locally. For such deals, the masters might order their slave-agent to convert some or all of the ransom money he raised into desirable objects, and they would provide him with their own wish lists, stressing that, for instance:

> You should pick up these goods with the money that will be given to you and against the account of the ransom [funds] ... [thus] a load of majolica [glazed pottery], a chest of drinking mugs and a chest of plates ... a dozen large tankards, a dozen middle-sized flagons, and two dozen small cups ... five *braccie* [three yards] of green Velvet ... [and) ten *braccie* [six yards] of fine silk of dark blue color ... a portable bar the size of ten decanters, eight big decanters and two small [ones], and the bar should be of walnut.

Yet it was unlikely that ordinary fishermen such as these, coming from little towns like Barletta or Grottammare and saddled with an average ransom of around 370 ducats, had much chance of ransoming themselves, whether with cash or with majolica. Either through their emissary or their letters they called on everyone they could think of, trying to spread their nets as wide as possible. Vincenzo Palamari, a slave from Calabria, knew how wide this could be. Writing to his wife in 1752, he asked her to give his best regards, along with a gentle reminder of his situation, to 12 assorted godfathers, a godmother, 2 brothers-in-law, his various brothers, their sons, and "all those in all their houses." For good measure, he threw in the prince and princess of Calabria. If these peasants and fishermen expose the extent of their poverty in the letters they wrote home, they also reveal the vast extent of their social networks. The connections of those who lived in the larger cities were correspondingly greater. The Neapolitan Lodovico di Cesare, writing home in 1734 from his slavery in Tunis, asked his mother to pray that his new master, who had yet to arrive back in port, would be a good one. Then, beginning with his neighborhood *padrino,* a certain Sig. Nicolò Binigaso, Lodovico set out for her a remarkable itinerary of favor asking and debt collection:

> Be sure to ask Uncle Angalillo in Naples that he keep his friendship ... and above all not to let me die in the hands of these

> Dogs; then ask my sister Viola to say a *Sacra Regina* for me to Our Lady, that 1 should die a Christian; and my brother Carmino, and [you], and all the neighbors, and Friends, and relatives ... [including] the uncles and aunts. Give my best to Uncle Previto, that he could help me in something with some friend of his, and say a Mass for the neediest Soul in Purgatory. My greetings to Uncle Cannelone and his wife and all those of [his] house; and my best to Marzolla and her husband; and Margarita and Francesco, and tell them to pray for me. Our Lord knows that Francesco owes me 15 *carlini,* and Nicola de Garella owes me a ducat, and Gioseppe [son of] Aunt Frosina owes me 12 *grane.* And it will all he over if you don't do anything for me.[4]

While it was no doubt the best strategy he could come up with, Lodovico's attempt to squeeze a ducat here and a ducat there from relatives as distant as he could recall would not have gone very' far towards paying off a ransom of 200 or 300 ducats. He might do better if he could persuade his kin to sell "the oxen and some shacks," or cash in their dowries, though it might result in starvation or ruining his female relations' hope of making an honorable marriage.[5] The sheer futility of raising such sums in largely cash-free societies may be one reason why some family members were apparently willing to simply write off relatives who fell into slavery, refusing to go out and canvass family and neighbors or even answer letters from Barbary (though this may say more about the mail system across the Mediterranean). It is heartrending—as it was no doubt intended to be—to read the anguished letter that a sailor named Nicola from Capri wrote to his "Dearest Brother":

> For around a year and a half I have been a slave in Tunis, and no letter has come from you [to know] if you are dead or alive. Why do you act like this? because you have yourself not yet suffered slavery'. God, come to free me from this, that I am as if 1 were in Hell, always in chains, with little to eat and bad sleep! Oh, if only my mother and father lived and could hear my sorrows that this letter makes plain, they would try to cover me with their tears, but I already see that you do worse than a stranger: with all that you are my brother, you don't have [any] feelings of pity; I pray you, then, for the love of God, at least do it for charity as a

> neighbor [would], because to this you are obliged, since God commands it, seeing how you have forgotten you are my brother.[6]

Once the relatives of poor slaves had run through their own extensive but meager social networks, they usually turned to those charitable institutions and pious individuals who might see their case as worthy. Most of these could only provide a portion of the necessary ransom, and sometimes it was quite a small portion, so anyone trying to amass funds this way had to make the round of many agencies and confraternities to piece together all that they needed. In a way, the system fed off itself: A little handout from one place might help stimulate a gift from the next. To make it work, though, a supplicant had to traipse all over a city or even a province, sitting in waiting rooms and audience halls for days at a time. The brother of Elena Sargente, slave in Tunisia, explained how one worked the system in the 1670s:

> She has had promises from the Eminent Sig. Cardinal Barbarino, 50 scudi; from the Trinitarian Fathers of Santa Francesca Romana, another 80 scudi; from the Discalced Religious Fathers of the Spanish Congregation, 15 scudi; and from you Venerable Signori, another 50 scudi. And since despite the diligence undertaken she has not found other charity to make up the sum of 300 pieces of eight demanded for her said ransom [about 260 scudi], she humbly petitions [you] for other alms.[7]

In places targeted by corsair slavers, the realization was slow in coming that someone needed to do something for these "wretched impoverished laborers, [who] survive day-by-day." It arrived in some states much sooner than others, and in some not at all. Catholic nations were quicker to respond than Protestant, partly because they predominated around the Mediterranean and were consequently exposed first to corsair attacks. Catholic Europe also enjoyed the venerable services of two religious orders devoted entirely to ransoming slaves as a charitable undertaking. The Order of the Most Holy Trinity, or the Trinitarians, had been founded in France by Jean of Matha and Felix of Valois in 1193. Our Lady of Mercy, the Mercedarians, had been started by Pedro Nolasco in Barcelona, in 1203. The orders had originally been conceived to free Christians and Muslims enslaved during the Crusades. After several centuries, as open warfare between the

faiths became more sporadic, the orders lost some of their initial intensity—the kind of personal commitment to freedom's cause that led many a medieval Mercedarian to pledge himself to slavery to free a worthy captive, or that induced the Trinitarians to commit one-third of their order's income—from land, bequests, and alms—exclusively for the redemption of slaves. As Christian-Muslim tensions further lessened in the late 14th and early 15th centuries, the orders went into something of a decline.

When those hostilities flared up again, after the fall of Constantinople in 1453 and Granada in 1492, the two orders were slow to respond. As a result, especially in Italy, which some called "the Eye of Christendom," secular governments tried to step in on behalf of their own subjects. As we have seen with the hapless Sieur Le Page, however, governments, which had to balance policy, budgets, and dynastic ambitions with popular welfare, were not always so adept at managing the ransoming business. Whereas all the Italian statelets with seacoasts and populations exposed to corsair attacks, from Genoa to Venice to Sicily, tried to set up ransoming magistracies in the latter half of the 16th century, none was completely successful. In part, this was because no Italian government was willing to impose specific taxes for this purpose. This was something the British crown under Charles I tried to do in the 1630s, by converting a portion of the already controversial "Ship Money" tax into use for ransoming slaves. Since the application and misuse of Ship Money are generally agreed to have been among the direct causes of the English Civil War and Charles's eventual overthrow and beheading, perhaps the Italian states were wise in avoiding this particular way of raising their ransom funds.

Instead, the Italians followed the approach of the Spanish, collecting funds in a way that highlighted ransoming's role as a charitable act. This turned a state tax into a voluntary tithe that depended on the conscience of the giver, rather like appeals and organizations that were set up to dower poor girls or promote missionary activities abroad. Donators tended to either give at the insistent urgings of the collectors with their little boxes or, if they were sufficiently well off, when they came to draw up their wills. Both moments of charity could be channeled by the giver to benefit the slaves of one particular town or district, and throughout Italy a certain parochialism prevailed, where local churches and city councils struggled to keep "their"

ransom funds from disappearing into the maw of the prince or his ransoming board. In the archives of the primary ransoming agency for the Papal States, the government-run confraternity known as Santa Maria del Gonfalone, there are dozens of letters from various affiliate branches scattered between Rome and Bologna, filled with the same sorts of demurrals:

> (We] have spent not a small part of the money [we collected] to rebuild our Oratory... Our recent solicitations have only brought in a few pennies, because of the permanent poverty of this district... In the past we never had the responsibility to collect alms, which is why we are not ready to do so ... It is a great displeasure to the brothers that we cannot give anything this year, but the Sig. Bishop has taken all our funds to reconsecrate the Cathedral ... We will make every required effort in this appeal, although it is true that the greater part of the People in this Region are in a miserable Condition, both for the scarcity of food and for rhe rising weight of Papal, Communal, Church and Excise taxes, and other expenses. None the less, we hope for a good Solicitation ... Despite the rains caused by the recent Earthquakes in this area, we have managed to collected a scudo [1.1 ducats] ... we would prey [you] please advise us where we should send this little bit of alms.[8]

If the use of voluntary' confreres was not especially effective, employing professional collectors had its own problems. In states like Venice and the Papacy, where the "commissioners" were particularly used, their customary' share of what they gathered was 30 percent, which may have had the effect of making the job too popular. In hopes of easy money, counterfeit collectors were always invading the countryside, so it was also necessary to furnish the real ones with the properly notarized papers and have local governors keep an eye on the operation. All this cost additional money, which further reduced the actual take in these solicitations, perhaps also because prospective donators, beset by all sorts of other organizations, seem to have suffered from charity fatigue. With times perpetually hard, and food and (especially) cash in short supply, those regions not directly affected by corsairs saw no real reason to contribute. Even large populous districts in the interior of the Venetian state might come up with only 100 ducats or so in a year—not even enough to buy back a single slave. Those regions

that were the prey of raiders tended to ask for more than they gave, overwhelming the state agencies with slave lists much more extensive than their contributions.

Even if they did pry loose enough cash from their subjects and compiled a list of citizens to be ransomed, government redemption agencies still faced the problem of how to do business with those who were, not coincidentally, their sworn enemy. Even the French, who had relatively benign relations with the Ottomans and maintained an on-and-off consul in Algiers by the late 16th century, found that dealing with pashas and slave owners could prove extremely fraught—as Sanson Le Page found to his cost. For most other Christian nations on the Mediterranean—especially if they had any connection to Hapsburg Spain—relations with the Barbary regencies were still more erratic and less predictable. Those states that first tried to organize ransoming expeditions soon found themselves caught in a web of mutual suspicion, hostility, greed, and fear that at times seemed worse than the open warfare than was usually the norm.

When the Gonfalone, ransoming for the Papal States, made its first foray to Barbary in 1585, its governors chose a pair of Capuchin friars to lead the expedition. The presence of Fra' Pietro of Piacenza and Fra' Filippo of Roccacontrada (Capuchins only went by their first names) underscored the missionary and charitable nature of the venture, though a couple of Roman nobles, senior members of the Gonfalone, were assigned to the party as well, to help steer the two friars through the political and financial thickets of the negotiations. Just how complex these would be became evident even before they left Christendom. Since Rome was officially at war with Algiers, it was necessary' to get safe conduct passes from another European port, so the expedition could safely sail through the gauntlet of corsairs that waited along their route. Leaving Rome, the party traveled first to Genoa, but then had to press on to Marseilles, before they could find a merchant well enough connected with the Barbary' trade to provide them with both their safe-conducts and letters of credit that could be converted into cash in Algiers. All of this took several months.

In their uneventful voyage to Algiers, which lasted about three weeks, the friars could mull over what they knew *of* the city's current pasha, a renegade Christian known as Hassan Veneziano—Hassan the Venetian. It appears that someone back in Rome had thoughtfully

supplied them with a little booklet that provided a not so encouraging description of this man, "so greedy and tyrannical that he is believed to be the crudest [pasha] that has ruled this city in the memory of man ... [someone] extremely astute, [who] seeks to get money out of everyone, respecting nobody."[9] A short time earlier, according to this account, a combined Spanish-Portuguese mission had come to Algiers to ransom Iberian slaves and was subjected to ail sorts of "burdens and brutalities" by Hassan Pasha and his henchmen on the Divan. Suspicious of the expedition, Hassan rejected their safe-conduct pass. He refused to meet with the Iberians, but he also refused to let them leave. The ransomers had to cool their heels for days, before Hassan decided they could start their work after all, but only when they had paid him 200 scudi up front for the privilege. Not to be left out, the Divan demand 200 more scudi on its own behalf.

Hardly had the Iberians purchased their right to ransom, when word came that an Algerian *re'is,* a renegade Christian, had been captured and burned at the stake by orders of the Inquisition in Valencia. A mob of Algerians, probably whipped up by their pasha, surrounded the house of the ransomers and demanded that 10 priests be burned in exchange. Claiming they needed the protection, Hassan sent a company of janissaries to guard the Iberians, though he also charged them heavily for the service. The crowd settled for just one slave priest and another Catalan, who had already been ransomed, and both of these were taken, weeping and crying, from the *bagno,* to be burned the next day. To redouble the insult, Hassan refused to return the ransoms of those two unfortunates, "although other times when such outrages happened, they had always paid back the price [already given]." The men were burned, but Hassan and his minions had already moved on to another game, where they "sought to buy Christians all over Algiers, whether blind or crippled, of every quality, old and useless, which, although they bought them for fifteen or twenty scudi, they forced the Ransomers to take them for a hundred scudi each." As a final insult, when the Iberians were getting ready to go, they were forced to buy a few more worn-out old slaves before they could get the permission (and their sails) to leave.[10]

Very likely, stories like this one persuaded Fra Pietro and Fra Filippo to be exceedingly cautious in their dealings with the pasha and his court. Rather than run the risk of traveling with cash—Hassan had

stolen over 5,000 scudi of the Iberians' ransom funds, on the flimsiest of pretexts—the Romans came to Algiers furnished only with letters of credit. Though this long-distance financing carried a surcharge of about 15 percent, it had its supposed advantages. For one thing, the ransomers thought that if they came without bulging chests of silver, they might generate less of the get-rich-quick bonanza atmosphere that had made their predecessors' job so difficult. Slave masters would theoretically be calmer about the sober and serious process—less likely to run out scouring the countryside to buy up "old and useless" Christians they could fob off on the redeemers. The slaves too, it was hoped, might forebear from mobbing the ransomers with (largely false) identity papers when they came ashore, some of them trying to "steal the name" of ransom candidates who might be away or dead.[11]

Putting up a modest front caused the expeditions some unwanted repercussions, however. Fra Pietro and Fra Filippo were so caught up in their role as simple redeemers representing a poor regime that, among other things, they decided not to bring Hassan Pasha any of "the customary presents" given to rulers in Barbary. Hassan, not surprisingly, took this as both a significant loss of income and a personal slight. As a result, he was ill disposed towards the negotiations from the very' start. He found excuses not to meet the friars, or treated them arrogantly when he did—arrogant even by his standards, that is. If these Romans were as poor as they claimed, they were really not worth seeing. Moreover, having quickly run through their letters of credit—a mere 3,000 scudi—the ransomers needed to get more loans if they were to keep up their redemptive work. They soon found that having an established reputation as friars dedicated to poverty did not make them very attractive prospects among the local merchants they called on in their search for more funds.

Part of the problem may have been that nobody in Algiers, merchant or Moor, really believed the Capuchins' protestations of poverty. After all, it was common knowledge all over Barbary' that the Catholic Church was fabulously rich and "that the Pope, by not eating for a single day, could [have enough money to] amply ransom everyone." To Hassan Pasha and his Divan, it looked as if the Romans were playing them for rubes. They saw themselves as great men, and as such they deserved to receive worthy emissaries—well dressed, free with lavish gifts, and generous with promises of future deals. Anything less was insulting.[12]

Unable to get the kind of advantageous terms that Hassan Pasha had granted to a Neapolitan expedition a short time before, Fra Pietro and Fra Filippo could only ransom a few of the state slaves he owned. They decided that the greater part could wait until the following year, after the mercurial pasha had finished his three-year tour in Algiers and the sultan sent a new viceroy. Instead, the friars did most of their business with second-tier slave holders—members of the Divan, wealthy *re'is,* the *aga* (captain) of the janissaries, the "page" of the pasha, and so forth. The prices they paid ranged from 60 to 100 scudi per slave. This appears rather cheap—double that was not unusual—but it turns out that most of these slaves were not only old and crippled, they were also not even Romans. In the lists the friars compiled of their purchases, they openly admitted they, like so many Christian negotiators before them, had been out-maneuvered. Next to the names of a succession of Corsicans, Portuguese, and Spaniards, the brothers noted how a particular batch of slaves was bought "by force, in order to have those [others] who are from the Papal States." Everyone—even as far down the government hierarchy as the pasha's page—seem to have a pretty good idea of how to play hide-the-slave, making sure that the ransomers could rarely have the captive they wanted unless they bought one, or even two or three, whom they did not.[13]

By the time they ran out of money, the friars had managed to ransom only 71 slaves—not much of a dent in the long list that they had so optimistically left Rome with six months earlier. Of these, only about a third were from the Papal States. The rest came from all over Italy, the Mediterranean, and even farther afield—there were names on the list from Germany and Hungary. The friars' failure to complete their mission was not entirely due to the cunning of Hassan Pasha and his minions, however. The slaves themselves showed admirable skills at working their way into the affections of the ransomers, doing little odd jobs and sharing their insider knowledge of Algiers. Such relationships had a tendency to generate a sense of responsibility on the friars' part to help such captives whenever they could.

This pull on their consciences became a positive obligation when it came to slaves who had been willing to nurse other slaves. This particular act of charity—healing the sick—was one the friars particularly identified with, since it demanded not only selflessness but could also risk death, when the disease in question was the plague. Admittedly,

such slave nurses might have been less in clanger than the friars themselves, since past epidemics could have given them immunity. Fra Pietro may have recognized this advantage, but in his notes there were still a number whose worthiness he praised, noting that, "although he is not of the Papal States, he served those with the plague."[14]

Virtually right on schedule, the plague struck Algiers starting in late April 1585. Its arrival convinced lay members of the expedition that it was definitely time to leave the city. They did not get away fast enough—during their three-week trip back to Rome several of their freshly ransomed slaves came down with the disease and died. As for the two friars, Fra Pietro and Fra Filippo decided to stay behind in Algiers. There seem to have been several reasons for this. On the one hand, the Gonfalone's redemptive efforts were far from finished, in the larger sense of the term. Someone had to take care of the spiritual needs of all the Roman slaves who were left behind, a job normally undertaken by slave priests. When the plague came into the city, however, Hassan Pasha decided it was time to clear out, and when he sailed away, he took the dozen or so slave priests who had been in town, all of them part of his personal retinue of captives. Left without moral or spiritual support, wrote Fra Pietro, "the slaves are in the greatest affliction, because they are denied the necessary food, oppressed in various ways, and deprived of spiritual help for their souls."[15]

Moreover, in order to free a few worthy slaves even after their funds had run out, the two friars had pledged themselves as collateral for loans. In a sense, they had enslaved themselves. They were thus obligated to stay until next year's expedition. It was a move that was expressly forbidden by the statutes of the Gonfalone, but they did it anyway. As a show of pity and piety, such a sacrifice was very heartening to the slaves, though the result of their choice was not exactly edifying, for the two friars were soon reduced to begging in the streets to survive.

With his characteristic and selfless passion, Fra Pietro threw himself into nursing the sick. As the plague spread through the bagnos of Algiers, the toll began to rise—first the friars reported 100 dead and then 300. In late May the inevitable happened. Fra Pietro came down with the disease, suffered "atrocious pains," and died on June 6th. Terrified, Fra Filippo hid himself as best he could, giving religious aid only to the healthy. But the plague was not to be denied, and he, too,

fell sick and died, just two months after his colleague. The ransoming expedition that the Gonfalone had sent out with such high hopes—and such a long list—ended on a decidedly more somber tone, with two of its leaders prematurely dead, some serious debts, not many slaves ransomed, and most of those the wrong ones.[1]

It was bad enough that, with all its sacrifices, the expedition only managed to ransom 30-odd Roman slaves. Just two months after it delivered its hard-won ex-captives back to Roman soil, the Gonfalone had to suffer a still greater indignity. In June 1585, just *off* the Italian coast, an Algerian corsair captured a papal galley and brought it back to Algiers, along with "around fifty" new Roman slaves. As labors went, redeeming slaves in Barbary must have struck some Romans as distinctly Sisyphean.

Not surprisingly, many state ransoming agencies, however well funded and good intentioned they had originally been, found it difficult to keep up the emotional and financial outlay for work that seemed to make so little difference. After a decade or so of large expeditions that brought in several hundred slaves, the Gonfalone went dormant. By the 1620s, despite ever-rising losses to the corsairs, including some spectacular raids on the Roman mainland, the papal agency was able to redeem only two or three slaves a year, usually just captives whose relatives provided the bulk of their ransom. Without some fresh source of income—a new bequest, perhaps, or (as happened in Rome) a share of the tax on playing cards—there was simply no funding to keep buying back slaves as fast as the corsairs could take them. Even the biggest redemptive agencies in Italy, like the Provveditori sopra Ospedali in Venice, the Real Casa Santa della Redentione de' Cattivi in Naples, and Santa Maria Nova in Palermo, could find themselves out of business for decades at a time.

Though the Italian statelets may have floundered in their struggle to ransom captives, the English were almost farcical. Charles I's Ship Money may have been imposed in part for freeing enslaved Britons, but it was largely squandered by the Crown for other, more attractive ends. Even those who managed to raise funds privately on behalf of a relative often found their cash sequestered by government agents and used to free those more in royal favor. As to France, we have seen what a mess the French could get themselves into. Not surprisingly, both these great powers found it easier, if even more costly in the

short term, to send a fleet to bomb Algiers and then open negotiations. The results could vary. After the French navy made one such attack, enraged Algerians seized French missionaries, tied them over the mouths of cannon, and blew them to bits in full view of the fleet. Ultimately, if only because of the sheer firepower they loaded into their merchant ships, Britain, France, and Holland managed to protect their trade and keep their subjects from enslavement by the Algerians. The Moroccans, as we have seen, were another story.

In contrast to the stuttering and often bumbling attempts of other European states, the ability of the Spanish to ransom their subjects stands out. Spain's success in the redemption business is all the more remarkable for the dogged hostility that persisted between the Iberians and their Muslim foes. Far less interested in establishing trade than in waging holy war with the Ottomans, Spaniards were among the most enslaved of Europeans. Spanish soldiers were taken captive during battles with the Ottoman janissaries; their merchants were seized on the high seas by corsairs; and their villagers were regularly plundered during coastal raids. Over the course of the 16th and 17th centuries, they and the Portuguese were hauled by the tens of thousands into the slave markets of Algiers and Salé. Leaving so many of his Catholic Majesty's subjects to die in chains in the thrall of heretics and unbelievers was simply untenable for the Spanish church and government.

As it happened, Spain managed to mount regular ransoming expeditions that were the envy and admiration of Europeans everywhere, even the Protestants. They certainly owed much of their success to their monopoly control over New World silver. Reliably pure, Spanish pieces-of-eight were in constant demand in Algiers and Tunis, and millions of them, minted in Mexico City and Lima, flowed to Barbary to buy freedom for Spanish slaves. The Spanish also showed a certain insight into the ransoming problem, in deciding to treat slave redemption as a question of religious charity rather than an affair of state. This meant that they separated ransoming—which required a long-term, continual commitment—from the more fleeting concerns of government policy. It also allowed them to outsource the ransoming business, keeping their royal deputies subservient to the efforts of (variably) the redemptive fathers of the Trinitarians and Mercedarians.

These two religious orders found new opportunities for their services after the Spanish conquest of Granada in 1492. They were especially

welcomed by the Most Catholic Monarchs, who saw their redemptive activities as vital to the broader religious call of *Reconquista.* Growing in wealth and activity throughout the 16th century, the orders hit their full stride by the mid-1600s, as the Venetian Antonio Tedaldo Barbarella, himself a former slave, advised his masters in the Venetian Senate:

> The Mercedarians would be somewhat better than the Capuchins [to employ) in this ransoming, for the practice they have in managing it with dexterity ... They usually depart in the spring [and] are accustomed to carry [enough cashl to ransom 250 or 300 slaves. The cash they carry [with them] in chests are pieces of eight from Mexico, but of [full] weight, [or] Spanish *clobles of* weight ... The Turks are happy to see the said priests, who on the voyage [hoist] a banner of the Mercedes ... and no corsair on the sea troubles them, and in Algiers they treat them with respect.[1']

Considering their devotion and efficiency, it is somewhat surprising that many other Catholic governments besides Spain were less than keen on letting the two orders to operate within their territories. The French were generally welcoming to the Trinitarians—if only because the two founders of the order, Jean of Matha and Felix of Valois, had both been French (the French to this day refer to them as the Mathurins)—but they were suspicious of the Mercedarians who often squabbled with their fellow redeemers. Even the Trinitarians were kept under tight control by the regimes of Richelieu and Mazarin, and the fathers operated more as members of the royal bureaucracy than as an independent religious order.

In Italy, where local governments jealously guarded their fund-raising prerogatives, the Trinitarians and Mercedarians were not welcomed at all throughout the 16th and much of the 17th centuries. It was precisely to keep the two orders out of their sovereign territories that so many of the Italian statelets set up their own redemptive agencies, in a wave across the peninsula—Naples (1548), Rome (1581), Bologna (1584), Lucca (1585), Venice (1586), Palermo (1596), Genoa (1597), and Malta (1607). These agencies may have done something for national pride (and provided comfortable jobs for some local elites), but they generally did not, as we have seen, live up to expectations. Within a

generation or two their failures, in terms of both specific expeditions and long-term fund raising, were becoming plain to everyone.

By the later 1600s it was difficult for even the most feckless aristocrats and cardinals to pretend that the secular redemption systems, put in place with so much optimism a century earlier, were really working. Yet change was difficult and came slowly in these old-regime societies, even in the face of occasional angry mobs demanding some state action to "free the poor slaves held miserably in Barbary." There were old laws on the books in many Italian regimes that specifically banned the redemptive fathers from going about their business. Rome, for one, had made this a pre-condition for setting up the Gonfalone back in the 1580s, when Pius V had issued a papal bull to "ban anyone else [besides the Gonfalone] from privately seeking alms in the Papal States for the benefit of Slaves, and especially the Orders of Mercy and of the Trinity." The Venetians also had kicked the Trinitarians out of their territory several times, usually after loud and public accusation of corruption, infighting, or spying. [18]

By the early 18th century, however, even the last holdouts were ready to give in and let the two orders take over the ransoming business. The steady success of the Trinitarians and Mercedarians, year after year, tended to quell Catholic bureaucrats' natural instincts to maintain local control of redemption. Just the Spanish Trinitarians alone—by no means the largest segment of the ransoming fathers (though probably the most active) went to the Maghreb at least 72 times over a 77-year period during the 1600s. In the process, they liberated no fewer than 15,573 slaves, or an average of 220 slaves per trip.

The fathers had simply become too widespread, too skillful, and too well connected to resist any longer. They were, in a sense, two premodern multinational corporations, organizations that could offer a far broader range of ransoming services and skills than a small provincial organization like Bologna's charmingly named Santa Maria della Neve. Moreover, with the arrival of big French, British, and Dutch warships and armed merchantmen in the Mediterranean, some of the Wild-West character had finally gone out of the place. As most of the European powers—even Sweden—began setting up consulates in Algiers, it was possible to standardize, if not eliminate, much of the ransoming process. In most of the major North African slave centers, including Morocco, the Trinitarians and Mercedarians established hospitals that

functioned, in effect, as their own consular centers, giving their representatives a permanent presence in Barbary.

An inside glimpse at how all this worked was given to the Venetians in 1762, by a group of Trinitarians from Milan who wanted to sell their services to the Republic. What the Trinitarians had to say, all neatly preserved in a series of files in the Venetian State Archives, offers a fascinating glimpse into the art of self-promotion as it had developed in the Age of Reason, when ransoming slaves had been raised from a charity, to a business, to something of an art form. Theirs was not an appeal for a sacred over secular approach, and the fathers did not evoke the claims of tradition—though by rights the pious and venerable Trinitarians could have done both. Instead, they based their pitch on efficiency, careful planning, and (above all) a better deal. Over the course of the centuries, they noted, they had learned to exploit the multinational nature of their organization, and rather than limit their alms collection and slave redemptions to a single nation at a time, they could tackle whole swaths of territory'. One of the fathers explained how it was all organized, with what he termed “the Universal Method”:

> The Religion [i.e., the Trinitarians! being spread out in all the Christian [Catholic] Kingdoms and Provinces, the Religion itself has wished to rely on every Kingdom and Province for its respective redemption and duty, such that the Provinces of Portugal and Spain must take care of the Redemption of the Kingdom of Morocco, Fez, and Meknes; the Provinces of Catalonia and Navarre, France and Italy, these must take care of the Redemption of Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli; the Provinces of Germany, Hungary, Bohemia, and Austria must care for the Redemption of Constantinople, Alexandria, and Asia; that, then, of Poland, of red Russia, and Lithuania, these must take care of the Redemption of Tartary, in the Crimea.

It was a bold approach. The Trinitarians dedicated the funds they collected in one or two sovereign states to ransom the Christian slaves held in a designated region in the great slave map of the Mediterranean, even if those slaves came from all over Europe. It is easy to see why the Venetians and others who were jealous of their sovereignty (and their funds) were loath to see hard-earned alms squandered on some foreign wretches. Yet the Trinitarians insisted that, as a

multinational organization committed only to fairness and efficiency, they had come up with a system that would benefit every one of their clients:

> When the Corsairs arrive in port with their prey whom they have enslaved, immediately the Father Administrator goes to the harbor to identify the poor, plundered slaves. And of these he makes an exact note of their names, surnames, fatherland, and age, and this list is posted first in the master ledger of our hospital, [and] subsequently it is sent ... to the Father Procurator of the Redemption of the respective Convents and Provinces where the slaves were bom, with the assurance, not only of their slavery, their condition, and treatment, but also dividing them [into those] of greater and lesser need.

By ransoming in bulk, the Trinitarians promised, they could offer efficiencies of scale. The size and constant repetition of their expeditions effectively dictated the market, persuading slave owners to accept lower prices in exchange for regular, guaranteed payments, made in high-quality coin. The fathers making the pitch realized that the suspicious Venetians would probably not be swayed by mere policy statements, so they got down to cases. In a series of attached memoranda, they ran comparisons between the total prices (first and second cost) they had recently paid for various slaves, individuals and groups, against those the Venetians had just paid through various "merchants, foreign consuls, Protestants, and finally even Jews." These got quite specific. Slave costs in Algiers and Tripoli were compared, as were slaves of different national and socioeconomic backgrounds—"German slaves" vs. "Slaves of Turin;" "Slaves of rank" vs. "Slave sailors, soldiers, and others of low condition." In a final flourish, the pious pitchmen offered a complete breakdown (the first cost and all 10 of the "extras" making up the second cost) for two select individuals of presumably equal status—a ship's captain and a priest.[19]

In all the cases they presented, the Trinitarians came out on the winning side—often gloriously so. Slaves that princes and ransoming agencies brought home on their own cost anywhere from two to three times as much as those ransomed by the fathers (who helpfully figured out and included the percentage difference for their potential clients).

For the Venetians in the 1760s, with hundreds of their subjects in slavery, the savings promised by the Trinitarians made an argument that was very hard to resist.

How did they do it? As members of a religious order—and a diseased one at that—the Trinitarians were appropriately modest about their abilities. Nevertheless, they did point to several important practices that they followed, practices that helped keep costs low. To begin with, of course, the Trinitarians were not like the "heretical merchants and Jews" who "only do this [ransoming] for their own advantage and profit." Those philistines made "a true enterprise" out of the necessary job of shifting money from Europe to Barbary, a service for which they required a surcharge of between 12 percent and 14 percent. The Trinitarians, by contrast, shipped their own silver, under such strict safe-conduct passes that "no corsair on the sea troubles them." Right off the bat, then, they offered their clients "a not indifferent gain, which, when there is an occasion for ransoming many slaves, by itself will provide enough savings to ransom various others."

To get their clients promised price breaks of 100 percent or 200 percent meant the Trinitarians had to do more than simply avoid the import costs on specie. Getting the best price for slaves meant being as hard-nosed and cunning as the professional slave dealers, skills that the Trinitarians and Mercedarians perfected only after centuries of practice (Father Pierre Dan's disastrous experience in Algiers back in the 1630s shows what novices the Trinitarians still were in the early 17th century). One trick was having someone on the inside:

> Our Dragoman [i.e., polyglot interpreter] in the Hospital, paying his bribes, knows when to take the [correct] hour and the time to talk to the King [i.e., the dcy| and to work out the ransom, such that this gets done with the greatest advantage possible, paying the price of said Slave to his master in the presence of two Witnesses and of the slave himself, taking from it the content and certificates made of his payment, ratified by the French Consul.

They could also drive their prices low, the Trinitarians assured the Venetians with something of a rhetorical wink, because they were "practiced in managing this ransoming with dexterity," experienced enough, that is, to know how to game the system. When the chance

presented itself, they knew quite well how to cheat unsuspecting pashas and deys:

> It is our custom ... to take sick slaves into our hospital, [and] with such opportunity we take in also those who are not sick, [but] who have, with some small coins that they have paid to the Guardian of the Bagno, entrusted themselves to our care; it being necessary [for] this that they should have some sort of illness, we call the physician of the King and, by showing him a certain sum of money, have him recognize the slave [as] sick, and he speaks to the King his master, making him believe of the danger of his [slave's) death, such that one arranges with advantage [the slave's] ransom, and it is contrived with a small sum [of money).[20]

The redemptive orders did more than just ransom slaves at a tidy savings for their clients. Both the Trinitarians and the Mercedarians also managed to foreground the religious and charitable facets of the enterprise in a way that government agencies, with their political agendas and professional pitchmen, could never quite do. One impressive way they accomplished this was hy combining the ceremonial apparatus of the Church with the civic drama of public festival, in the form of processions celebrating the return of freed slaves to their homelands. In so doing, the fathers turned what was, after all, a somewhat embarrassing occasion—for many great powers (such as the British) there was something abject about buying their citizenry out of captivity, rather than freeing them by force of arms—into an event of celebration, piety, and even triumph.

These processions for freed slaves had a long history in Catholic states. In Spain, the Mercedarians were staging them regularly by the 16th century. Many were long, draw-out affairs, beginning in the port where the captives first set foot in their homeland, then reenacted at major cities throughout the realm. At the end, a grand finale was put on in Madrid for the slaves' presentation to the king. Some of the first big ransoms organized in Italy also ended with a rousing festival. Those slaves who were freed thanks to Fra Pietro and Fra Filippo's rather ill-starred expedition, were greeted in Rome by "a great concourse of people, to render thanks to God ... and then to receive the benediction of the Holy Pontiff."[21]

According to the Trinitarian Camillo di Maria, a good slave procession was "a Triumph of peace, of liberty, and of jubilation, without the mourning or the sadness of even one [person] to interrupt the joy." In all the cities along the route, but especially at the capital, which usually marked the culmination of the process, citizens met the slaves with outbursts of enthusiastic and noisy patriotism, like those of Milan, "beautifying the walls [of their houses] with tapestries and flags of various colors, and with many other embellishments." A procession in Palermo in 1771 was greeted with:

> Particular admiration [by] a numerous Citizenry that turned out everywhere the Procession passed, both from the balconies and from the windows of the Palaces, such as has rarely been seen in other observances and public celebrations of the City of Palermo; and enormous was the jubilation that was aroused in the souls of onlookers of every status, in [seeing] pass such a tender and edifying display."

The intensity and joy of these processions were remarkable even for an age where almost all urban celebrations ended up processing somewhere. Ideally, there was a little bit of everything in a good slave procession—soldiers and a military band; groups of chanting priests (both one or the other redemptive order and local squads of Capuchins or Jesuits); secular members of redemptive confraternities; clots of little boys and girls "dressed in the manner in which Angels are depicted" (see Figure 16.1) and armed with flowers or streamers; giant placards, showing actual scenes of the redemption in Barbary (see Figure 16.2); the fathers who had personally made the voyage and managed the ransom; and, of course, the ex-slaves themselves. These last were often dressed in the rags they had worn in captivity; some even carried their old chains (broken now), though other times the irons of bondage were replaced with ribbons—red and blue, the colors of the Trinitarians. Sometimes each of the ex-slaves went through the procession in the company of a local noble, who acted as his captive's patron during the course of the ceremonies.[25]

Although the route and the routine of these processions varied front place to place, most of them included certain rituals. Beginning at the city's church of the Trinitarians or Mercedarians, the ensemble wound

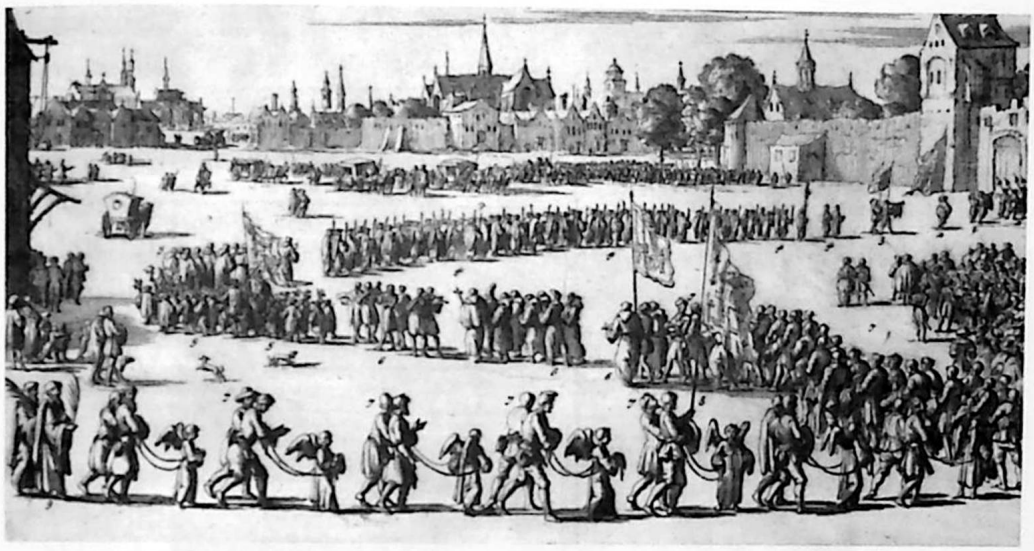

Figure 16.1 Procession of returning slaves in Europe. Pierre Dan, *Historic van Barbaryen cn des zelfs Zee-Roovers* (Amsterdam, 1684).

its way to the local cathedral or some other appropriately large church, often one dedicated to Christ the Redeemer. There a solemn mass was sung and a sermon delivered on the topics of liberation and redemption, in the presence of the ranking ecclesiastical hierarchy. Copies of the "catalogue" naming and describing all the liberated slaves were then offered around to the higher lords and clerics, while the slaves might be given little printed notes, or "passports," that attested to their new freedom. Either at this point, or after a further march to the palace of the prince, the ex-slaves were then presented to their ruler. He welcomed them back as his subjects once again—as slaves they had been under the absolute law of their Muslim masters—and often sealed the deal by giving each of them a gold coin that carried his likeness. Finally, the ex-slaves, now free citizens, might be taken to the convent refectory of the redemptive order and there served "a sumptuous and splendid lunch" by the very nobles who had accompanied them and by the fathers themselves.[24]

A participant in the procession staged in Palermo in 1771 for the return of 81 slaves said the event was to give thanks to God and to the redeeming fathers, for the grace of the One and the hard work of the others. At the same time, "all this hoopla" (as one historian has called it)—the pairing off with nobles, the lectures on freedom, the

Figure 16.2 Scene of Trinitarian redemption. *Catalogus captivorum Christi' anorum qtios Provincia* S. *Josephi* (frontispiece, Vienna: Joseph Gerold, 1776).

passports, the presentation to the prince, the meal—served the additional function of a ritual reintegration back into European society for those whom slavery had ripped away from every familiar bond and obligation. No doubt for those peasants and fishermen who participated this was the grandest event they would ever see in their lives—music, rich tapestries, a personal noble. Those who returned from the traumas of slavery, like those coming hack from the horrors of war, could appreciate a parade honoring what they have sacrificed, willingly or not, for their homelands. There is good evidence that many ex-slaves suffered a kind of "shell shock" from their brutal experience in captivity. For a few days at least they were embraced and welcomed home, in a series of celebrations that, within the limits of their

hierarchical and authoritarian societies, tried to wipe away the painful stain of their captivity.

This sort of "hoopla" was not for everyone, of course. Many of those who were freed by the redemptive orders went straight home after coming to their homeland, despite any promises they may have made while still slaves to take part in the ceremonies at the capital. One assumes such ex-slaves simply showed up one day, unannounced, at their family hovels somewhere in Calabria or Catalonia, to cries of joy and of relief—that Juan or Jean or Giovanni had returned after so many years to lend a hand to try and lift his family out of penury and starvation. The festivities that ensued were presumably small and brief—who could even afford the time off?

Nor were public religious celebrations of this sort very common beyond the Catholic world bordering the Mediterranean. In England and Holland, slaves were more likely to be returned thanks to military action rather than ransoming. As a result, the captives usually came home like returning prisoners-of-war, joining in processions with the victorious soldiers and sailors. In the Ottoman lands, where institutions like the Trinitarians and Mercedarians were notably lacking, slave ransoming was a question of personal finance and initiative, limited to men like Cussein, son of Abdulla of Elbassan, who tried to figure things out on their own. Muslim slaves only rarely gained their freedom through the concerted efforts of their pasha or municipalities. More likely, they got free by recapture, after the Christian galley or city where they were enslaved was taken by the janissaries. When the famed renegade corsair Ochali besieged and captured the city of Tunis in 1574, several thousand Turkish slaves gained their freedom in just this way, even as thousands of Spaniard soldiers lost theirs.

By the mid-18th century, the Trinitarians and Mercedarians had become victims of their own success. Thanks to their widely admired skills in fund raising, coupled with the steady taming of the Barbary regencies by the great powers, the number of slaves the fathers were able to ransom finally began to exceed those the corsairs were able to capture. This may explain why the Trinitarians decided to approach an old holdout like Venice in the 1760s—they were running out of both fund-raising territories and fresh slaves to free.

The measure of their success can be found not only in the steadily decreasing number of slaves held in Barbary (by the 1760s there were

only about 3,000 in Algiers, 1,000 or so in Tunis, and under 100 in Tripoli) but also by the steadily increasing ransoms demanded for those remaining. Ever more money chasing ever fewer slaves inevitably drove prices up—some would say vertiginously so. We can take as a (ver)' general) measure the prices noted by Paul Deslandres, great historian of the Trinitarian order. According to Deslandres, an "ordinary" slave who ransomed for 600 French livres in 1660 cost around 800 a generation later. By 1737, such slaves were going for an eye-popping 6,500 livres, though by 1780 this had dropped down, to a still-not-inconsiderable 3,000 livres. Even though prices obviously varied widely from place to place, slave to slave, and master to master, the increase is clear, and it was noted by many at the time. It should probably come as no surprise that so many ransomers insisted that the inflation was "caused by such exorbitant demands" on the part of slave owners, and none of them recognized how much they themselves, and the formidable ransoming institutions that they had created, contributed to the rise.[2]'

Despite all their success, the Trinitarians and Mercedarians were never able to winkle quite all the Christian slaves out of Barbar)' and the Levant. Some, especially among the women, were always kept back by their owners. Indeed, the unsettled politics of the Napoleonic Wars would allow a considerable resurgence of corsair slaving between 1790 and 1815. What killed off faith slaver)' in Europe was partly the intellectual and moral revulsion that race slavery had begun to stir up in both salons and counting houses. It was a revulsion that finally found its expression in the *Declaration of the Rights of Man* and the French Revolution, and in a sense that if civilized men would foreswear owning or dealing in Black Africans, they could certainly do without putting Turks and Moors in bondage. At the same time, the population boom in 18th-century Europe produced an overcrowded countryside and an attendant flow of cheap labor to the cities, changing demographics in ways that rendered bonded labor—slaves, indentured servants, apprentices—increasingly superfluous.

The institution was too well rooted in North Africa and the Levant to disappear quite so readily. Well into the 19th century, a mix of faith and race slavery was still widely practiced—openly where it was legal, covertly where it was merely condoned. As a result, capture, enslavement, hard labor, and ransom remained distinct possibilities for

Europeans sailing the Mediterranean, though not for all Europeans in all situations. The more efficient consular and policing system of the great powers protected most British, Dutch, and Frenchmen from that fate, but many Italians, Spaniards, Greeks, and Slavs were not so fortunate. A small but steady number of these men and women continued to find their ways into the slave pens and private households of North Africa and the Levant, at least up until the French conquest of Algiers in 1830, and quite possibly even after that. As late as 1813, the Italian poet Filippo Pananti could still report a scene, a parting glance for those he left behind as, finally freed, he sailed from Algiers harbor:

> But with what feelings of regret did not the companions of our capture hear of the event which was about to separate us, and how painful for ourselves thus to leave them! We had scarcely arrived on board the vessel, when ... one of the Sicilian's crew [of the ship Pananti was captured on], who contrived to steal a few minutes from his daily labour, had got up on an adjoining wall to charge us with a message to his family, when a voice of thunder ordered him to descend; this was followed by the arrival of a keeper, who striking him violently on the head, he instantly fell off the wall, and we saw no more of him. Such was the last scene which struck my sight and made my heart bleed in the abode of pirates![26]

MOTES

CHAPTER 1

1. Foss, pp. 19-20.
2. Foss, p. 38.
3. Foss, pp. 26-27.
4. Foss, p. 23.
5. Foss, p. 22.
6. Foss, pp. 42-43.
7. Foss, p. 24.
8. Foss, pp. 52-53.
9. Foss, pp. 54-55.
10. Foss, pp. 160-61 .

CHAPTER 2

1. Saunders, p. 13; Salvago, pp. 93-94.
2. Grammont, "La Course," p. 11; Okeley, p. 33.
3. Okeley, pp. 15-16.
4. ASV, POLP, bu. 102, filza 11, 1 July 1765; also ASV, Senato Mar, filza 221, 19 April 1619; and ASV, CSD, filza 43, 17 Sept 1652; and ibid, filza 64, 19 Aug 1665.
5. The story of Colmbin is in ASV, Senato Mar, filza 286, 20 September 1633; and Salvago, p. 96.
6. Friedman, "Christian Captives," pp. 618 and 622; de La Motte, p. 42 and note on p. 44.
7. Quoted in Braudel, p. 882; Bono, *Corsari barbarcschi,* p. 146; also Dcslandres, vol. 1, p- 391.
8. Davies, B2v; Braudel, p. 871.
9. Fondo Salvatore Marino, Palermo, Carte sciolte, no. 204.

CHAPTER 3

1. Quoted in Vitkus, p. 8; in Matar, p. 49; Wolf, p. 184.
2. In Matar, p. 46; in Wolf, p. 185.
3. In Matar, p. 80; in Milton, p. 18.
4. Matar, pp. 45-73.
5. In Vitkus, p. 355.
6. In Vitkus, p. 356.
7. In Milton, p. 58.
8. Milton, pp. 11-18.

CHAPTER 4

1. Dan, pp. 318-19.
2. CPF, SRC, Barbaria, bu. 3, fol. 377.
3. ASVat, GON, bu. 1139, fol. 157.
4. Quoted in Matar's "Introduction" to Vitkus, p. 15.
5. Chastelet, p. 12; Fontenay, "Le Maghreb Barbaresque," pp. 22-23; Brooks, P-31.
6. d'Aranda, p. 15 and 219.
7. Davies, p. 11; Okeley, pp. 13-14.
8. Elliott, pp. 15-16.
9. Foss, pp. 31 and 34; Okeley, p. 36.
10. ASN, SCRC, bu. 18, 10 October 1780; ASVat, GON, bu. 8, fol. 257; d'Aranda, p. 220; Busnot, p. 151.
11. Foss, pp. 120, 125, and 129.
12. Laugier de Tassy, p. 101; CPF, SRC, Barbaria, bu. 3, fol. 541.
13. Morgan, p. 489; CPF, SOCG, bu. 254, fol. 65; CPF, SRC, Barbaria, bu. 3, fol. 29.
14. D'Aranda, pp. 247-48.
15. Matar in Vitkus, p. 15.
16. ASN, SCRC, bu. 16, -3247.
17. Rawlins, p. 271; CPF, SRC, Barbaria, bu. 4, fols. 597-98; ibid., bu. 6, fols. 207-16; Morgan, pp. 532-33.
18. D'Aranda, pp. 173-74.
19. Gramaye, *Diarium,* p. 140; Dan, p. 320; *Catalogo di cinque cento vend Schiavi riscattati nel presence Anno del Giubileo 1675* (Rome, 1675), p. 6; Dominici, p. 27.
20. Quoted in Todd, p. 41.
21. San Lorenzo, p. 24; Okeley, p. 28.
22. Okeley described the ship building on pp. 51-66.
23. Okeley, p. 83.
24- Mouette, p. 38.
25. Busnot, pp. 167-68.

26. Mouette, p. 38.
27. Story in ASV, DAC, filza 12, 5 August 1578.
28. ASV, DAC, filza 12, 15 April 1578.
29. Teixeira, p. 147.

CHAPTER 5

1. The story of Pratica <Ji Mare is in ASR, PGR, bu. 224, filza 40, fol. 1084r. and ASVat, bu. 8, fol. 44. ASVat, Codice Urbinate, bu. 1056, 11 May 1588.

CHAPTER 6

1. Bonaffini, pp. 42-56; ASN, SCRC, bu. 14, 575, 581, 582, 617-19, 639, 640 and 646.
2. ASN, SCRC, bu. 14, cases 633, 643, and 646; Archivio di Stao di Lucca, Archivio Amolfini, no. 117, file G, pp. 8-9: quoted in Lenci, op. cit., p. 56, note 10.
3. Haëdo, p. 241; Abbe Carre, p. 22.
4. Guglielmotti, vol. 3, p. 191.
5. Morgan, pp. 608-9; Knight, p. 20.
6. Marott, pp. 14-15; Mascarenhas, p. 153.
7. Morgan, p. 588.
8. ASR, PGR, bu. 312, filza 2, fol. 43r.
9. The story' of the raid is in ASR, PGR, bu. 342, filza 18.
10. Okeley, p. 80; J. Theodore Bent, cd., *Early Voyages and Travels in the Levant* 2 vols., vol. 1, *The Diary of Master Thomas Dallam, 1599—1600* (London, 1893), p. 17.
11. Gustavo Valente, Le *torri costiere della Calabria* (Cosenza, 1960), p. 22, cited by Bono, *Corsari Barbareschi,* p. 25; also Knight, p. 9.
12. Based on Mattei; Mascarenhas, pp. 151-54; and Lenci, p. 56, n. 10.
13. Mattei, fol. 46v and 47r.
14. Knight, p. 18.
15. Morgan, p. 577; Mascarenhas, p. 153.
16. Marott, pp. 13-14.
17. Morgan, pp. 576-77 and 670.
18. Morgan, p. 614.
19. Morgan, pp. 489 and 500.
20. Davies, p. 6.
21. Knight, p. 19.
22. Mattei, fol 47v.
23. Morgan, pp. 505 and 608; Mattei, fol. 48r.
24. Fondo Salvatore Marino, Palermo, *Carte sciolte,* no. 204.

25. Marott, p. 14.
26. Knight, p. 10; ASR, PGR, bu. 215, fika 18, fol. 1194v.

CHAPTER 7

1. This tale is based on a series of depositions found in CPF, SOCG, "Rodi," fols. 585r-586v.
2. Earle, p. 170; quote in Earle from Du Mont, p. 138; Bamford, "The Procurement of Oarsmen," p. 33.

CHAPTER 8

1. Haëdo's list is reproduced in Dan, pp. 308-9; also Salvago, pp. 475-76; Milton, pp. 15 and 24; Earle, pp. 104 and 121.
2. Morgan, p. 616.
3. CPF, SRC, Barbaria, vol. 1, fol. 153.
4. Earle, pp. 126-27; Okeley, p. 39; Morgan, p. 616.
5. Baker, pp. 166, 172-73, 188.
6. Pananti, pp. 354-55.
7. Morgan, p. 282.
8. Foss, pp. 9-10.
9. Elliot, p. 6.
10. Mouette, p. 3.
11. Phelps, pp. 3-4.
12. Du Chastelet, pp. 95 and 98.
13. Galland, p. 27; Du Chastelet, pp. 97-98.
14. Elliott, p. 6; Foss, p. 10.
15. Morgan, p. 622; d'Aranda, p. 5; Dan, 301-2.
16. Mouette, p. 3; Pananti, p. 34
17. Elliot, p. 6; Foss, p. 10.
18. Foss, p. 10; Mouette, p. 3; Marott, pp. 8-10.
19. Morgan, p. 622; Elliot, pp. 6-7.
20. Haselton, p. 5; Chastelet, pp. 258-59.
21. Gramaye, pp. 320-21.
22. Teixeira, pp. 136, 139-40.
23. Teixeira, pp. 16, 148, 151.
24. Baker, pp. 144.
25. Baker, p. 111.
26. ASVat, GON, bu. 1139, fols. 159-60; ibid., bu. 1144, fol. 267.
27. ASN, SCRC, bu. 14, 30 June 1697, cases ~1458-*1461.
28. Strays, vol. 2, p. 80; Mouette, p. 4; Gramaye, *Diarium* pp. 321-23, 325-27; also Gramaye in *Ptirchas,* p. 279; Elliot, p. 7.
29. Foss, pp. 13 and 15.

30. Phelps, p. 5; Elliot, p. 7.
31. ASN, SCRC, bu. 15, case —2901.
32. Elliot, p. 8.
33. Pananti, p. 42; Bono *Corsari barbareschi,* p. 146; Elliot, p. 8.

CHAPTER 9

1. Drawn from Chastelet des Boys' *I'Odyssee.*

CHAPTER 10

1. Morgan, p. 625.
2. Mascarenhas, p. 54; Chastelet des Boys p. 159; Elliot, pp. 12-13.
3. de La Motte, pp. 42-43.
4. Pananti, p. 67.
5. Laugier de Tassy, pp. 222 and 225.
6. Du Chastelet des Boys, vol. 11, p. 161; vol. 12, p. 23; Galland, p. 34.
7. D'Aranda, p. 9; Davies, p. B2v.
8. Dan, pp. 392-93; Okeley, pp. 9-10.
9. D'Arvieux, p. 267; Dan, p. 392.
10. Rawlings, p. 254; Mouette, p. 8
11. Dan, p. 393.
12. Okeley, p. 11.
13. d'Aranda, p. 9.
14. D'Arvieux, pp. 267-68; Genovese, p. 506.
15. De La Motte, p. 43.
16. Laugier de Tassy, p. 70; Dumont, p. 138.
17. Chastelet des Boys, p. 350.
18. Galland, p. 31; D'Arvieux, pp. 43-44.
19. d'Aranda, pp. 11-12.
20. CPF, SRC, Barbaria, bu. 4, fol. 491; Laugier de Tassy, p. 163; Dan, p. 87.
21. ASVat, GON, bu. 1139, fol. 305; Gramaye, p. 138 and n. 6; Chastelet des Boys, p. 27.
22. CPF, SRC, Barbaria, bu. 3, fol. 41; d'Aranda, p. 18; Dan, p. 406.
23. Cresti, "Gli schiavi cristiani," pp. 429-30; Okeley, pp. 41—42.
24. Francesco di San Lorenzo, p. 16; Rawlings, p. 256; Grammont, "La Course," pp. 13-14; De La Motte, p. 41.
25. Pignon, "L'Esclavage," pp. 151-56.
26. CPF, SRC, Barbaria, bu. 1, fol. 4; Okeley, pp. 16-17.
27. D'Aranda, pp. 47-48, 156.
28. Okeley, pp. 19-21.
29. Okeley, pp. 41-42.
30. Okeley, p. 17; d'Aranda, p. 157.
31. D'Avrieux, p. 225.

32. Morgan, pp. 674-75; d'Aranda, p. 17.
33. d'Aranda, p. 13; Morgan, p. 675.
34. Roberts, p. 11.
35. Okcley, p. 37; d'Aranda, p. 14; CPF, SRC, Barbaria, bu. 4, fol. 406; Dan, p. 407.
36. Bachrouch, p. 130.
37. Venture de Paradis, p. 314-
38. Elliot, pp. 14-15.
39. D'Avrieux, p. 267; Mascarenhas, p. 58.
40. Mouette, p. 9.
41. ASVat, GON, bu. 1144, fol. 331.
42. Morgan, p. 487.
43. d'Aranda, pp. 7-34.

CHAPTER 1 1

1. Based on Davies, pp. 6-12.

CHAPTER 12

1. Cervantes, cited in Mafrici, Mezzogiomo e *[rirateria,* p. 110.
2. Grainmont, "La course," p. 9 and n. 1; d'Aranda, pp. 10-11.
3. Mafrici, p. 112; Morgan, p. 517.
4. Morgan, pp. 516-17.
5. *Amhasciatori Veneziani. Relazioni,* vol. 1, p. 174.
6. Struys, vol. 2, p. 80.
7. Mascarenhas, p. 148; Lodolini Tuppoti, p. 96; Saunders, p. 10.
8. Saunders, p. 10; Marott, pp. 61-62.
9. Knight, vol. 1, p. 29; Mascarenhas, p. 148.
10. Mascarenhas, pp. 148-49; Morgan, p. 517.
11. Saunders, p. 10; Mascarenhas, p. 148.
12. Knight, p. 29; Mascarenhas, p. 150.
13. Haedo, quoted and translated in Friedman, "Christian Captives," p. 619; Mascarenhas, p. 148; Knight, p. 29.
14. Lodolini Tuppoti, pp. 99-102; Morgan, pp. 617-18.
15. Marot, p. 19; Knight, p. 29.
16. Grammont, "La course," p. 20; CPF, SRC, Barbaria, bu. 1, fol. 25 lv; ASVat, GON, bu. 1144, fol. 331.
17. CPF, SRC, Barbaria, bu. 1, fol 324r.
18. CPF, SRC, Barbaria, bu. 1, fol. 308r.
19. Knight, p. 10; CPF, SRC, Barbaria, bu. 1, fol. 325r.
20. CPF, SRC, Barbaria, bu. 1, fol. 349r.
21. Foss, p. 123; Morgan, p. 275.
22. d'Aranda, p. 12; Dan, p. 411.

23. De La Motte, p. 59; D'Arviuex, *Memoires,* pp. 228-29.
24. Foss, p. 20; Salvago, p. 93;Venture du Paradis, p. 39.
25. Foss, pp. 28 and 30-31.
26. Pananti, pp. 30 and 90.
27. d'Aranda, p. 12.
28. Foss, pp. 26, 29; d'Aranda, p. 157.
29. CPF, SRC, Barbaria, bu. 3, fol. 144; D'Arvieux, p. 225.
30. De La Motte, pp. 46-47.
31. De La Motte, p. 46; D'Arvieux, p. 229.
32. d'Aranda, p. 21; Morgan, p. 275.
33. CPF, SRC, Barbaria, bu. 3, fol. 414.
34. Morgan, p. 517; Fontenay, "Le Maghreb barbaresque," p. 10; Saunders, pp. 10-11.
35. Saunders, p. 11; Kingdon, p. 4.
36. Foss, p. 25
37. Mouette, p. 10.
38. Busnot, pp. 2-3 and 145.
39. Busnot, p. 4.
40. Busnot, pp. 146; Mouette, pp. 30 and 37.
41. Laugier de Tassy, p. 364; Busnot, p. 161.
42. d'Aranda, p. 60.
43. Laugier de Tassy, p. 363; Mouette, p. 19; Busnot, p. 147-48.
44. Phelps, p. 10; Brooks, p. 40; Mouette, p. 23; Lagier de Tassy, p. 363.
45. Mouette, p. 30.
46. Brooks, p. 41; Busnot, p. 147.
47. Busnot, p. 155.
48. Lagier de Tassy, p. 364; Mouette, p. 16; Brooks, pp. 12, 40-41, and 60.
49. Busnot, pp. v-vi, and 149-50.

CHAPTER 13

1. Wortley Montagu, p. 146.
2. Sieur du Mont, p. 268; Melman, p. 64.
3. Wortley Montagu, pp. 128 and 149.
4. Wortley Montagu, pp. 155 and 166.
5. Wortley Montagu, pp. 132 and 163.
6. Wortley Montagu, pp. 132-34.
7. Wortley Montagu, pp. 146 and 166.
8. Wortley Montagu, pp. 145 and 157.
9. Wortley Montagu, pp. 145-46.

CHAPTER 14

1. Bon, p. 44.
2. Hill, pp- 139, 153, and 155.

3. Wortley Montagu, pp. 104-5.
4. Craven, pp. 341-42.
5. CPF, SRC, vol. 2, fols. 378-82; vol. 7, fols. 122 and 129.
6. ASVat, GON, bu. 1144, fol. 100.
7. ASN, SCRC, bu. 14, cases 581 and 582.
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PGR = *Processi Criminali, Govematore di Roma*
ASN, SCRC = Archivio di Stato di Napoli, Santa Casa per la Redentione dei Cattivi
ASV = Archivio di Stato di Venezia
CRD = Coliegio, *risposte di dentro*
DAC = Ambasciatori a Constantinopoli, *Dispacci*
POLP = Provedditori sopra Ospedali e Luoghi Pii
SM = Senato Mar
ASVat, GON = Archivio Segreto Vaticano, mss Gonfalone
CPF = Congregazione "De Propaganda Fide," Vatican City
SOCG = "Scritture originali riferite nelle Congregazioni gencrali"
SRC = "Scritture Riferte nei Congressi: Barbaria"
VMC = Venice, Musco Correr

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